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Teachers keen on politics told to quit service

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PETALING JAYA, Sat. - Deputy Education Minister Datuk Abdul Aziz Samsuddin today asked teachers who are more interested in politics to quit the profession.

The ministry is taking this tough approach in the light of several recent incidents where teachers have tried to impose their political views on students.

Admitting that the statement was "harsh", Abdul Aziz said it must, nevertheless, be made, as teachers who sought to impose their political views on students were "poison to the impressionable minds of their charges".

"They should quit. In fact, if they are brave, they should resign and become politicians.

"Those who choose to remain are hypocrites. Many of these teachers are able to further their studies because of the Government's efforts, and yet they are ungrateful.

"We cannot allow these teachers to throw acid on our faces any longer. Teachers then helped the country fight for independence. Now, they are trying to destroy the country."

Abdul Aziz was speaking to reporters after opening the "Subang 2000 Academic Excellence" discussion at the Petaling District Office in Subang Jaya.

The most recent incident concerning teachers who brought politics into the classroom was one where a religious teacher in Malacca purportedly maligned the Government and criticised Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in front of students.

Another case was in Marang, Terengganu, where a teacher prepared politically-flavoured questions for a school test.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Rais Yatim had also brought forward several cases and said the teachers concerned should be charged under the Sedition Act.

On the Malacca case, Abdul Aziz said the ministry was waiting for a report from the State Education Department.

"If it is found to be true, we will take stern action against the teacher."

Abdul Aziz said many Malays had now forgotten the struggles of their forefathers in bringing development to the country.

"I am disappointed that there are youths now who criticise the Government. This is a sign that our race will be destroyed.

"I am afraid that our own race will one day destroy itself, all over politics."

Asked whether kindergartens in Johor would be closed in view of cases of the hand, foot and mouth disease in Singapore, Abdul Aziz said the decision would be based on the recommendation of the Health Ministry.

On private colleges, Abdul Aziz urged parents and students who had problems with private educational institutions to lodge complaints with the ministry.

"It is the responsibility of these institutions to ensure quality education and if we find that they are not providing it, we will close them or ask them to rectify whatever problems," he said.

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