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## New subjects for schools

ameo) 2001" by Chok Suat Ling; Jaswinder Kaur

THE Education Ministry is planning to introduce new subjects in schools and universities to inculcate students with a new code of morality and ethics, its Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad said.

He said "new morality and ethics" include values the people must have to face the challenges of a globalised era, and civics -the relationship of individuals to society.

"There needs to be increased focus on certain values like honesty, having a pride of place and the willingness to work hard.

"We must prepare ourselves for a new culture and cultivate values that are different from before," he said after visiting Universiti Malaysia Sabah with delegates of the 36th Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (Seameo) Council Conference yesterday.

Musa was unanimously elected Seameo president for a year. Seameo has 10 member countries - Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Laos, the Philippines, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia.

It has six associate member countries - Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands and New Zealand; and one affiliate member, the International Council for Open Learning and Distance Education.

The three-day conference was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Pacific Sutera Hotel in Kota Kinabalu on Monday.

Seameo is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1965 to promote co-operation in education, science and culture in the region.

Dr Mahathir had urged for a new code of ethics and morality to be devised to enable knowledge and the information age "to be a blessing for us all the way."

He said perhaps the new ethics and morality could be taught as a compulsory subject.

"Unless we are taught how to handle knowledge well, knowledge will spell disaster for us," the Prime Minister had said.

Asked how good ethics could be reinforced across the curriculum, Musa said during Science classes, teachers could ask their students to ensure the cleanliness of the laboratory, teach them the proper way to handle chemicals and remind them to pay attention to detail.

"Teachers need to mould their students this way. If this could be carried out across the curriculum, we will be able to mould our people very well."

On research pertaining to genetics in universities, Musa said that was a different "brand" of ethics, one which all humanity should be concerned with.

"If it is to improve a human being's resistance to certain diseases and is confined to only that, then the question of ethics is not so critical."

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