

Pupils learn to mingle in summer camps

BY LAM LI

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PASIR GUDANG: Students of primary schools will have summer camp fun under a programme to encourage young Malaysians of all races to work, play and learn together.

The idea is to get every pupil - from both national and vernacular schools - to taste, at least

once during their six years in primary school, the experience of team-building amid a multi-racial setting.

The "integration camp", which had been on a trial run for a year, would be held during school holidays with the Education Ministry providing the funds and facilities, such as camping sites and equipment.

Some pupils had already participated in such four-day camps during trial runs in Johor, Malacca and Kedah.

All pupils would have to attend these camps to foster better understanding of the country's plural society, Education director-general Datuk Abdul Rafie Mahat said yesterday.

He said the concept was being

introduced in primary schools as the ministry felt that secondary students were already well-prepared to interact among themselves due to the multi-racial setting in secondary schools.

"In primary schools, pupils from national and vernacular schools need inter-school activities to bring them together," he said after opening the national-level Patriotic Gathering

for Secondary Students here.

Abdul Rafie said apart from promoting integration and understanding among the children, the camp would help to improve ties and co-operation among teachers from different schools.

He said the education departments in various states would help

● TURN TO PAGE FOUR

Schools free to modify camp activities

● FROM PAGE ONE

schools organise the camp as a regular activity during school holidays and even during weekends.

"The camp activities and duration can be modified to suit the needs and convenience of various schools.

"For example, a two-day one-night camp during weekends could serve the same purpose.

"The objective is to organise as many integration camps as possible, so that each pupil will have the opportunity to participate.

"Participants will receive a certificate to reinforce the importance of such activity in national unity," he said.

Earlier, Abdul Rafie Mahat delivered a motivational speech to some 1,000 secondary students from various states gathered here for a four-day leadership camp in conjunction with National Day.

Their programme includes field trips to various districts and kampungs in Johor to experience rural living and to learn more about local history to appreciate the contributions of local leaders.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will attend the closing ceremony for the gathering at the Pasir Gudang Stadium here on Saturday.