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Racial segregation allegation dominates Malay media

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THE furore caused by allegations of racial segregation in schools may die a natural death with the open apology by National Union of the Teaching Profession secretary-general Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam.

That president Tengku Habsah Tengku Petra joined him in saying sorry for the faux pax which shocked many nationwide may help in easing the situation.

The issue had threatened to develop into a full-scale "war" between the NUTP and opposing forces, made up largely of headmasters, if not for the timely intervention of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Berita Harian and Utusan Malaysia carried reports over the week on the issue, publishing the Prime Minister's views on the matter on Monday and yesterday.

In his latest statement, Dr Mahathir advised parties involved in the controversy to consider the matter closed.

The Berita Harian quoted the Prime Minister as saying that he did not see the need to haul Siva Subramaniam or the NUTP to court over the allegations as long as they apologised.

The Utusan Malaysia, meanwhile, quoted Siva Subramaniam as saying that the union did not have any ulterior motive in making the allegations.

The Utusan Malaysia and Berita Harian had been following the issue closely since Monday with scathing editorials and reports chastising the NUTP and Siva Subramaniam for their alleged mistake.

Awang Selamat, the nom de plume of the editorial writer last Sunday, had in his missive castigated Siva Subramaniam for creating an issue that had racial overtones.

The piece, headlined Don't let Siva get away, took Siva Subramaniam to task for not doing his homework before levelling the "damaging" allegations.

The newspaper and writer, incensed over Siva Subramaniam's hesitance to apologise since making the allegations in December, were echoing the tone of an editorial last Monday on the issue which asked Siva Subramaniam to withdraw his allegation.