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Schools

UNION OPPOSES ANY MOVE TO CLOSE TAMIL AND CHINESE SCHOOLS

IPOH, June 3 (Bernama) -- The National Union of Tamil School Teachers of Malaysia opposes any move by any organisation to eliminate national type primary schools in the country.

Its president, Shahul Hamid Mydin Shah, said that the present system whereby Tamil and Chinese schools exist, guaranteed by the constitution, should be allowed to continue as there had been no problem in their existence.

"It has contributed to national intergration and racial harmony in this country. The concept of Sekolah Wawasan (Vision School) should be further enhanced so as to create national integration rather than calling for the closure of Tamil and Chinese schools," he said here.

Shahul Hamid, who is also the secretary general of the Congress of Teachers Unions in the Education Services Malaysia, said that recently there were calls by people to close down national type schools so that there would only be a national school system so as to forge national integration.

He said that the issue cropped up recently following Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that non-Bumiputeras would account for 10 per cent of students to be accepted in Mara Junior Science Colleges (MRSMs) and matriculation courses from next year.

Some groups have opposed the proposal and called for the closure of Tamil and Chinese schools so as to have only national schools and for students to compete on merit.

"The union calls on educationists, politicians and NGOs not to be emotional in this issue but rather to think rationally on the education issue which has a long-term effect on the nation," he said.

Shahul Hamid said that the existence of Tamil and Chinese schools had been guaranteed in the Education Act 1996 and at such, no parties should question their existence, which may lead to destabilisation of racial harmony in the country.

He said that the union supports the call by the prime minister so that MRSMs and matriculation courses be opened to non-Bumiputeras.

"This will create competitiveness among the races in the country in the field of education which is healthy," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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