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DPM: No need for NUTP officials to see me as matter is closed

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said there is no need for the National Union of the Teaching Profession officials to meet him over the school racial segregation controversy as the matter was considered closed.

He said the NUTP and its secretary-general, Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam, had already apologised for the distress caused by their allegation of racial segregation in schools.

"They have apologised, that is good. It is not difficult to say I'm sorry. So it is better if we stop pursuing the matter.

"On my meeting with Siva Subramaniam, I don't know whether we should pursue the matter or not since Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad himself had considered the matter closed.

"There is no need to pursue the matter. Anyway, an investigation has been conducted into the allegation. So, what else is there ...," Abdullah said when asked whether he would still meet the NUTP.

Siva Subramaniam had earlier said that he would try to meet Abdullah, who is also the Home Minister, on Monday to discuss the matter and other education-related issues including that of the delay in the construction of teachers' quarters and computer labs nationwide and the conflicting statements on teachers' annual leave.

Abdullah said the Independent Committee on Segregation in Schools had concluded that there was no deliberate attempt or hidden agenda to stream pupils according to race in national schools.

The seven-member committee headed by Emeritus Prof Datuk Dr K.J. Ratnam had dismissed as "baseless" the allegation by the NUTP that there was deliberate streaming of pupils according to race in about 10 per cent of the 9,052 schools nationwide.

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