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Call to teach abacus, mental arithmetic in Mandarin

By Ramlan Said; Lim Chee Wei

THE editorial in Nanyang Siang Pau yesterday called for Mandarin to be made the main medium in the teaching of abacus and mental arithmetic in Chinese primary schools.

This was in response to a report on Friday in which Deputy Education Minister Datuk Hon Choon Kim announced that the two subjects would be introduced in Standard One in all types of schools from next year.

According to Hon, schools need not allocate additional periods to teach the subjects. There were reports that the Education Ministry preferred schools to teach the new subjects in English, but Hon said Chinese schools could decide on which language to use.

Under the ministry's plan, Hon said, Chinese schools could allocate two out of its six Mandarin periods or use two of its four English periods to teach the subjects.

The editorial surmised that Hon's remarks had cleared doubts on the medium of instruction for the two subjects, a potential controversy as far as Chinese schools were concerned.

Praising former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for making abacus and mental arithmetic part of the education system seven years ago, the daily believed the move would not burden pupils.

In other news, president of the Chinese Federation (Huazhong) Datuk Seri Lim Giok Tong was reported as saying that it would continue with the practice of consensus-building in addressing issues concerning the Chinese community.

Reported in Nanyang, Lim said the federation would continue to communicate with the Government and non-governmental organisations on problem-solving.

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