

31/01/2003

Better administration of religious schools on the cards

IPOH, Thurs. - The Federal Government is expected to introduce a better system of administration for all religious schools based on the approach used in Johor.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said the issue was discussed during a meeting between the State leaders and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad recently and the Education Ministry was studying the matter.

"We agreed on this matter during the meeting, but it is not right for me to elaborate too much on that," he said after attending a special briefing on Johor religious schools by Johor State Secretary Datuk Ayob Mion here today.

About 1,000 people attended the function including Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali and representatives from religious schools in Perak.

Ghani said financial constraint was the main reason why other States could not adopt the system in Johor where religious schools were managed by the State Religious Council.

For example, he said the Johor Government spent RM115 million on the operation and development of religious schools in the State last year.

The Johor religious school system was established in 1918 by then Johor Ruler Sultan Ibrahim and enrolment is open to Year One Muslim pupils before or after they attend the academic session at national schools.

There are now 525 such schools in Johor with more than 200,000 students and 5,000 teachers.

"There will be financial implications to the Government, but it can be minimised if the religious classes are held at national schools," said the Johor Menteri Besar.

He urged the public not to worry about the fate of religious schools.

"Everyone must wait as the Government will come up with a final decision soon."

Tajol Rosli said the Perak Government would fully adopt the system used in Johor if the Federal Government agreed to give financial assistance.

He said the State Government had to spend between RM65 million and RM67 million yearly if it took over all the religious schools located in Perak.