

Minister: Certain quarters out to ignite racial issues

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Some quarters have been fanning the flames of incidents that happen in schools to turn them into racial issues, said Education Minister II Idris Jusoh.

Commenting on the 'shower room-canteen' issue in SK Seri Pristana and the alleged assault of an ethnic Indian student by a teacher in Rawang, he said that society should learn to be more forgiving.

"Malaysia is a multiracial country so we should be a forgiving society. If a mistake is made, we solve it the Malaysian way instead of blowing things up to the extent that it does not help anyone...We must learn to forgive and forget," he was quoted by Berita Harian as saying.

NONESpeaking at an event in Seremban, Idris (left) added that making quick assumptions actually strains harmony between races.

"When something that is not right happens between a teacher and a pupil, and they are of a different race, we should not look at things from a racial perspective."

The daily also quoted the deputy minister as saying that it is important for all Malaysians to be proficient in Bahasa Malaysia so they can communicate with each other.

He was responding to Chinese education group Dong Zong's opposition to the National Education Blueprint which extends teaching hours for Bahasa Malaysia in vernacular schools from 180 hours to 240 hours a week.

Meanwhile, the Star reported that 70 percent of English Language teachers are "incapable" or "unfit" to teach the subject in schools.

Idris was quoted as saying that this was based on the results of the English Language Cambridge Placement Test taken by 60,000 English Language teachers recently.

He said that the ministry will send the teachers for courses to help them improve their proficiency.

"The ministry will also consider sending them overseas for exchange programmes

to take up Teaching of English as Second Language courses," he reportedly said.

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