

Saturday for some teachers

Ministry may propose special group

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PUTRAJAYA: One way to overcome the problem of getting teachers to work on Saturday is to have special groups to handle co-curricular activities on that day.

This will free subject teachers from having to work on Saturdays and keep to a five-day workweek like all other civil servants.

However, Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said this was a suggestion that the ministry was exploring and had yet to bring to the Cabinet.

"The Cabinet may decide to increase the number of teachers involved in co-curricular activities or physical education or to have those who just specialise in these two fields," he said after the ministry's post-Cabinet meeting yesterday.

"We are bringing the issue of



Hishammuddin: Says the ministry is exploring this idea

teachers' five-day workweek to the Cabinet next week. It is too early for us to bring up the issue of incentives (for teachers who have to come to school on Saturdays) as what we want is to place more emphasis on co-curricular activities."

He said Director-General of

Education Datuk Dr Ahamad Sipon had briefed him on the meeting between ministry officials and the teachers union representatives last week.

The decision reached at the meeting was that teachers would not be forced to return to school on Saturdays.

In an immediate response, National Union of the Teaching Profession president Ismail Nihat said the ministry should take into account the number of teachers needed for schools.

"Teachers who specialise in the different areas such as sports and uniformed bodies will be good for students. The only worry is whether the Government will be able to train an adequate number of teachers for schools."

Another worry, he added, was the teachers' rapport with the students. Those who taught students in and out of the classrooms would bond better with the students.