

No controversial issues

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New Ethnic Relations module to focus on racial unity

KUALA LUMPUR: Controversial issues that might cause racial disunity will be left out of the new Ethnic Relations module.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said the book would give emphasis to analyses, and interpretations of facts and theories to help promote racial unity and find common ground among the races.

Giving the example of the chapter on Islam Hadhari, the minister said that while the previous module was relevant only to Muslims, the new one emphasised the universal values of the concept.

The revised module, which is to be used as a standard textbook in all public universities, will be presented to the Cabinet for approval in nine days' time.

Mustapa said the module, which was presented to him on Wednesday by Purification and Evaluation Committee chairman Prof Datuk Dr Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, was currently undergoing a final revision.

"I'm confident it will be a contribution towards the building of racial unity in Malaysia," he said.

The Ethnic Relations module, which is a compulsory subject in public universities, was

thrown into controversy when Universiti Putra Malaysia used a guidebook that contained "judgmental" interpretations of racial incidents.

Following public concern over the issue, the ministry set up the Purification and Evaluation Committee to evaluate and filter through the draft module of the subject.

The committee sought the views of recognised academics, as well as Cabinet members of all races.

Responding to questions on the current university student elections, Mustapa said: "We cannot satisfy everyone, but

some issues like the campaign period have already been addressed."

The chairman of public universities, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Assoc Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Wahid Samsudin, announced on Thursday that students running for elections could begin campaigning on Thursday, and not from next Monday to Wednesday as previously announced.

On his deputy Datuk Ong Tee Keat's response to his apology to Education Ministry officials, Mustapa said he would discuss the matter with MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting next week.



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