

Approval for two Chinese schools

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PUTRAJAYA: TWO new Chinese schools will be built under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP). They are SJK (C) Tun Tan Siew Sin in Putra Heights, Selangor, and SJK (C) Kulai (2) in Johor.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said this showed that his discussions on the matter with Barisan Nasional component party leaders had not been just

rhetoric.

"We have our ways of discussing such issues and it is not our style to make an announcement until everything - such as the land, location and allocation - has been sorted out," he said after his ministry's post-Cabinet meeting yesterday.

Last week, Deputy Minister Datuk Noh Omar had said in Parliament that the Government would not build any vernacular schools under the 9MP.

Hishammuddin, however,

pointed out that his deputy could not be blamed for what he said because the matter was not under him.

"As minister, I am the one with the power to decide whether we are to have such schools," he said.

The minister Said he had already discussed the matter with component party leaders, including MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and Gerakan president Datuk Seri

Dr Lim Keng Yaik.

"This is why I decided to announce these new schools to prove there are such plans. There has never been a policy of not building national-type schools under the 9MP," he said.

"In fact, the Cabinet approved the name change to SJK (C) Tun Tan Siew Sin from SJK (C) Putra Heights one-and-a-half months ago."

On another matter, Hishammuddin said there had been only 354 applications from

Malaysians to study in international schools here.

He announced in May that the Cabinet had approved in principle that international schools would be allowed to open up 40% of their places to Malaysians.

Hishammuddin, who is Umno Youth chief, also said he fully supported Putera Umno chief Datuk Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim's stand on the Mat Repit issue.