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National Service modules at schools

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PUTRAJAYA: National Service (NS) training modules will be incorporated into co-curricular activities in secondary schools. The aim is to make the students more patriotic.

The details will be finalised by the Education Ministry and other authorities before the pilot project takes off by next year.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said:

"We think this is a realistic way to make our young people more patriotic. After all, every year only 100,000 of 400,000 youths are picked at random for NS training.

"If this is done, they may no longer be required to undergo training after Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia," he said when closing this year's Youth Patriotism Congress at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre yesterday.

The two-day congress, which started on Saturday, was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Hishammuddin said the modules would be introduced for students who had taken Penilaian Menengah Rendah.

He told the congress, which was attended by students and youth leaders, that the expansion of the NS modules in secondary schools would be streamlined.

"Do not see this as a burden. Look at it positively because what we are doing is to ensure that you can stand tall, have inner strength and can be on par with others. We will be realistic in our approach."

He said academic achievement was meaningless if young people failed to uphold peace and harmony in our ethnically diverse country. He said NS training had been successful in instilling good values in those who had taken part.

He also hopes that pre-schoolers can be taught to be patriotic.

"Today, it is not enough for the teachers to just teach. We need to instil core values in our students like patriotism so they will not do insensitive things like belittling the national anthem or tearing down the country's flag."

On the resolution passed by the congress for the setting up of a national patriotism council and a na-

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Education Minister*

tional policy on patriotism, he said he would present a working paper for approval by the cabinet.

At a news conference later Hishammuddin, who is also the Umno Youth chief, said he would consider a resolution adopted by MCA Youth that question papers for Science and Mathematics in the Primary School Assessment Test be in Mandarin.

"I will discuss this with the leadership before deciding whether the proposal is viable or not."

On the statement by MCA Youth chief Datuk Liow Tiong Lai that it was not MCA culture to wave a sword when making a point, he said the question of who was holding the sword or kris for that matter, did not arise.

"What matters most is the wisdom of the holder of the sword or kris," he said, adding that he welcomed MCA Youth's pledge to defend the Constitution through proper channels.