

Group wants govt to solve Tamil school woes

NST- 30/3/2007

NO school should be denied the right to have proper resources and teaching premises, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said yesterday.

Nazri was speaking after receiving an eight-page memorandum from representatives of a group of protesters demanding more funds for Tamil schools.

More than 1,000 people comprising members of parent-teacher associations and students from Tamil schools in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Perak, Negri Sembilan and Malacca had gathered outside Parliament House.

The group held banners, one of which read "Please don't marginalise Tamil schools".

They dispersed after two hours.

According to the memorandum, Tamil schools were not given the funds under the Ninth Malaysia Plan which had promised an allocation of RM64.84 million to be disbursed equally over five years.

Instead of receiving about RM13 million a year, newspaper reports stated that the Tamil schools only received RM500,000 in the past year.

Led by Charles Santiago, the



I will do everything within my means to help vernacular schools.

*Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz
Minister in the Prime
Minister's Department*

head for the Group of Concerned Citizens, five representatives met Nazri to explain the shortage of funds and other problems.

Santiago told Nazri that these schools were dependent on government funds for infrastructure development and maintenance.

In the memorandum, the prime minister was urged to pay immediate attention to the neglected schools and address urgent human resources needs.

Nazri, after hearing their grouses, said he would deliver the memorandum to the prime minister and raise the matter in the cabinet.

"I will do everything within my means to help vernacular schools and ensure that the allocation under the Ninth Malaysia Plan is disbursed accordingly to the Tamil schools."

Educational policy matters such as teachers' training and the introduction of subjects in Tamil language were up to the Education Ministry to decide.

Parti Keadilan Rakyat president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who was present, called for quick action to tackle the poor conditions of Tamil schools.