

MALAY MAIL

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◆ NATIONAL CIVICS BUREAU (BTN) REVAMP

Boot for errant facilitators

No place for those who undermine 1Malaysia concept, says Nazri

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PETALING JAYA: The modules for the under-fire National Civics Bureau (BTN) will be revamped as planned, but also under the microscope will be its facilitators.

Those who do not meet the required standards will be given the boot, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz.

He said although the BTN module was not "all bad" or was entirely opposed towards efforts to unify the different races, he said special attention had to be paid to the conduct of the programme's facilitators when the government undertakes efforts to rid the BTN of "offensive material".

"I agree that the facilitators are one of the most important components of the programme. And if they are not in step with the prime minister's vision of 1Malaysia, they will be replaced.

"I believe from feedback received that they (facilitators) tend to take the sessions off course and colour it with racist remarks," he told *The Malay Mail* at the Parliament lobby.

Nazri maintained that the Cabinet's move to revamp the BTN module was not entirely influenced

Everybody knows the facts but it is not right to keep harping on them when we are trying to achieve national unity

- Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz

by calls from the Opposition, but also from those who had been directly involved with the bureau.

"Some of them are now in the Opposition," he said, referring to individuals, such as former BTN director and current Selangor Pas commissioner Datuk Dr Hassan Ali, and Sungai Petani MP Datuk Johari Abdul, formerly a BTN officer.

"When these people say that things are not right with the BTN courses, we have to reassess and not dismiss them merely because it came from the Opposition."

Elaborating on his disapproval of

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them when we are trying to achieve national unity," said Nazri.

"Chinese and Indians, too, were part of Malaysia and they, too, contributed in no small measure to the development of the country."

The BTN controversy came to light when the Selangor government recently issued a statement prohibiting its civil servants and students from the State's higher educational institutions from participating in BTN courses.

The Pakatan-led government had claimed that the BTN was an indoctrination process by Barisan Nasional and aimed at brain-washing Malaysians to hate the Opposition.

Selangor instead announced that their existing SPIES programme would instead be expanded to also accommodate civil servants and students to counter-measure the BTN.

The Penang government then followed suit with a ban on its civil servants on grounds that the courses were used to spread BN propaganda.

Yesterday, Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat announced that Kelantan had also joined Penang and Selangor in barring its civil servants from attending the courses, so long as its curriculum was not changed in

accordance with Islam.

Following Selangor and Penang's decision, Nazri announced that the BTN would be revamped, with the curriculum brought in line with the 1Malaysia concept. Nazri also later dismissed Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ahmad Maslan's statement that there would be no revamp but an "upgrade", maintaining that the revamp process would remain as planned.

Matters came to a boil when former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there was no need to revamp the BTN module as it was suitable for instilling patriotism among Malaysians.

Nazri slammed Dr Mahathir's stand as "racist", claiming that there were instances when those who attended the course felt angry when words like *Ketuanan Melayu* were used in the programme.

Following Dr Mahathir's call for Nazri to resign from Umno as it was a "racist" party, Nazri countered by labeling Mahathir the "father of all racism".

The spat between the two, as well as the poser over the content of the BTN module, had-altogether provoked a flurry of opinion among parliamentarians from both sides of the divide (*see accompanying story*).