

DATE: 3 / 12 / 2009

BTN minister: Patriotism, unity at core of courses

NST - 3/12/09

■ **By Sajahan Waheed**
news@nst.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: The National Civics Bureau (BTN) which was formed in 1974 has successfully inculcated patriotism and good values in its participants through its courses, said Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ahmad Maslan yesterday.

Ahmad, whose is in charge of the department, denied allegations by opposition politicians that the courses conducted by the bureau were politically motivated and instilled racial hatred in the participants.

"There is no truth in such claims as our main aim, through the programmes organised by the bureau, is to educate the participants on patriotism and unity among the various races.

"Since April this year, we have also been emphasising the 1Malaysia concept as envisioned by our prime minister (Datuk Seri Najib Razak)," he told the *New Straits Times* at the Parliament lobby yesterday.

Ahmad, who is also Umno information head, said the participants would go through the 1Malaysia module which teaches unity and eight core values — culture of excellence, perseverance, humility, acceptance, loyalty, meritocracy, education and integrity.

The participants also learn about the Federal Constitution, the social contract and the position of the Malays in the country, which, he said, were facts.

"Of course, there are instances when we go on to highlight what the government has been doing and our policies.

"This is normal and there is



Datuk Ahmad Maslan says the BTN courses have been emphasising the 1Malaysia concept

nothing wrong in doing so as the bureau is a government body whose scope includes emphasising on what the Government has been doing for the people."

He said the bureau empha-

sised issues in accordance with their relevance. For example, previously the focus was on Vision 2020, and then it was on human capital and now on 1Malaysia.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz, said on Monday that the government would revamp the course curriculum of the BTN to ensure that it catered to all races in line with the 1Malaysia concept.

Nazri said this was discussed in the cabinet and the Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan was instructed to discuss the revamp with the bureau's director.

Ahmad, who had previously served as an officer with the bureau from 1991 to 1994, said the Opposition was against the courses conducted by the bureau because they

had plans to have a similar course of their own.

"There is no truth in allegations that the courses promote racial sentiments as alleged by certain quarters. This is perhaps just the perception of some participants, including the children of DAP leaders who attended the course.

"We have been conducting these courses from 1974 and millions of Malaysians have participated but there have never been such allegations and complaints previously.

"The opposition is harping on these courses now as they have always been against all government agencies, including the police and judiciary. They always have issues to pick."

Ahmad said among the programmes included in the courses conducted by the bureau were lectures, prayers, marching, sports, physical and team-building activities.