

**Schools can nurture unity, says Muhyiddin**  
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PETALING JAYA: Schools are the nurturing ground for national unity.

There are plans to also use sports to foster ties among the young ones.

“I hope schools will heed the call to promote harmony. Avoid touching on sensitive issues. Respect our differences and accept it as a heritage to be cherished,” Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said when launching the World Interfaith Week celebrations at SMK (P) Sri Aman here yesterday.

Also present was Education director-general Datuk Seri Abdul Ghafar Mahmud.

He urged teachers, parents and schoolchildren to appreciate the country's diversity, with people of different backgrounds and religions.

“We are a family under 1Malaysia,” Muhyiddin, who is also Education Minister, said while reminding the people that the Malaysian society was unique.

“There are not many nations like ours. There are countries where there is only one religion but with many cliques at war with each other.

“There are also countries with people of different religions but there is tension among them that sometimes leads to bloodshed,” he added. “Malaysia has long embraced diversity and there is no fight, war or crisis sparked by religion.”

Abdul Ghafar said programmes such as forums and talks would be held from time to time to foster unity and understanding among schoolchildren.

“We need to organise activities that keep students informed and interested in the topic of unity and harmony. Some students may find forums dull, so our plans will have to include sports and other co-curricular activities,” he said.

Student Saifullah Qamar, 19, believes such programmes will be a good start towards promoting racial harmony.

“Such programmes could be run at inter-schools level, with national and vernacular schools taking part to build better rapport,” said the SMK (L) Bukit Bintang student.

His 16-year-old German friend, exchange student Hendrik Soeren Vogt, said he was amazed at the diversity of the culture in Malaysia and how the people were so closely bonded by the love for their country.

Source:

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