

Muhyiddin says was told no proselytisation at school
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 18 — The alleged attempts at converting Muslim primary schoolchildren to Christianity likely took place during private tuition classes held outside school, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin has said.

"I was informed that this case did not happen in school. It happened outside of school where parents may have taken their children for tuition," he told reporters after speaking at the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) College here today.

Muhyiddin, who also holds the education portfolio, said the authorities were keeping close watch on the situation closely, but stressed that it was up to Muslim parents to ensure their children are not exposed to proselytisation.

"It is the responsibility of the parents to monitor the situation. If it (preaching) really happened, the parents can actually lodge a report with the state religious departments and an investigation must be carried out," he said.

An Utusan Malaysia editor said yesterday that Muslim primary schoolchildren are being taught about Jesus by Christian youths aiming to convert them, which is illegal under Malaysian law.

Datuk Zaini Hassan, assistant chief editor at the Umno-owned daily, had written in his column that poor Malay children living in squatters along Jalan Klang Lama were singing, "Yes, I know Jesus loves me" and reciting the story of Jesus Christ's crucifixion, in their primary school.

He said that an Indian teacher from the school, known only as Cikgu S, had informed him Malay children were being given free English classes by young Christian evangelists every Sunday.

Zaini added that the school has sent a complete report to the local education department for further action.

Utusan Malaysia's latest claim comes on the back of heightened tension between Christian and Muslim groups following a raid by the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (Jais) on a dinner held at Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC).

Earlier this year, the Malay daily also accused the opposition DAP of conspiring with church leaders to turn Malaysia into a Christian state and install a Christian prime minister.

The unsubstantiated report had further raised the mercury as the dispute over whether Christians can use the word Allah to describe their god remains unresolved.

The government was also forced to order the release of 35,100 Malay-language bibles that were seized by Customs ahead of the April 16 state polls in Sarawak, which has the largest Christian population in the country

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