

'Collect aid during break'

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Uncollected money to be returned to the government

Parents who have not collected their children's money under the RM100 school aid programme can do so during the school holidays, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said.

Speaking at the launch of the Malaysia Unesco Day celebration here yesterday, he said the government had hoped the money could be disbursed to all schoolchildren by month-end.

"But if there are parents who cannot collect the money because of whatever reasons, they can still get it during the school break.

"The money will still be available to them. However, if left too long (uncollected)... until the end of the year, the money will be returned to the government."

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, said all uncollected money would go back to the government's coffer. He said all schools had been directed to return uncollected school aid to the government.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's intention of giving the school aid was to ease the burden of parents in buying school things for their children.

"If there are those who do not want such help as they have sufficient means to provide for their children's schooling needs, it is their right to do so."

He also said parents should be the one to decide what to do with their children's money.

"It all depends on them what to do with the money... whether to take it or give it to the schools."

He, however, warned schools not to deduct the school aid before giving it to the parents or students.

On the National Feedlot Corporation Issue, he said the matter would not be brought up in cabinet.

"The government knows the details and would not be easily influenced by the allegations of mismanagement against the nation's biggest cattle farming operator.

"After the NFC gives its explanation, it is up to the people (whether or not to believe the allegations)."

Earlier, he said Malaysia Unesco Day should be celebrated annually.

The country has benefited a lot from its cooperation with Unesco for more than 50 years.

"It is important to be a Unesco member to know where we stand (in various fields)."

Muhyiddin, who is also the president of the Malaysian National Commission for Unesco, was, so far, satisfied with the country's achievements, including in the Unesco's Education for All programme.

He also gave an assurance of Malaysia's continued strong commitment to achieve EFA by 2015.

"Malaysia continues to take up various serious measures and implements comprehensive programmes to improve our educational outcomes."