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## ***Mustapa 'reorganises' ethnic relations panel for the third time***

By: *Husna Yusop (Fri, 21 Jul 2006)*

*PUTRAJAYA: Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed today (July 21, 2006) clarified that the panel of experts to come up with the Ethnic Relations module for the universities will be multi-racial.*

*He also said is chaired by higher educational institutions management department director-general Prof Datuk Dr Hassan Said, and not Prof Datuk Dr Shamsul Amri Baharuddin from UKM as reported by the media.*

*The chairman of the panel is Hassan and the members are Prof Emeritus Dr Khoo Kay Kim, Prof Dr Cheah Boon Kheng, Prof Emeritus Datuk Dr K.J Ratnam, Shamsul Amri and others,'he said in his ministry.*

*On Wednesday (July 19, 2006), he issued a statement saying the committee is chaired by Shamsul Amri with its members comprising Prof Dr Abdul Latif Samian (UKM), Assoc Prof Dr Siti Aishah Ali and Baterah Alias (both from UiTM).*

*He had also said academicians such as Ratnam, Khoo (both from UM), Cheah (USM), Prof Datuk Dr Ramlah Adam (Malacca Museum) and Prof Datuk Dr Abdul Rahman Embong (UKM) would be consulted.*

*On Thursday (July 20, 2006), the Barisan Nasional Youth Education Bureau met Mustapa to express their dissatisfaction that the main committee is not represented by all races.*

*This is the third time in a row Mustapa named a different head for the Ethnic Relations course committee.*

*On Tuesday, he had said in Parliament a technical committee headed by Prof Dr Johan Saravanamuthu Abdullah from USM had formed a module framework for the Ethnic Relations course end of last year (2005).*

*He had also identified a panel of experts for reference comprising among others Shamsul Amri, Abdul Latif, Khoo, Prof Dr Azizan Baharuddin (UM), Prof Dr Jayum Jawan (UPM) and Assoc Prof Musa Ahmad (UiTM).*

*However, on Wednesday, Johan and Khoo denied their involvement while Azizan clarified that Musa and her were actually involved in drafting the module for the Islamic and Asian Civilisation (Titas) subject.*

*Mustapa clarified today that Johan did withdraw from the committee set up in 2004, citing his hectic schedule.*

*I want to set the record straight. Now we have formed a new panel. The members are those I have announced on Wednesday. We have met some of them while the others will be meeting us tomorrow.*

*After the panel has scrutinised, refined and evaluated the module, then only we go to the Cabinet and get the approval for it to be used in all the universities,'he said.*

*However, he refused to say when the matter will be brought to the Cabinet.*

*The issue was first raised early this week when certain quarters argued parts of the Ethnic Relations teaching guidebook used by UPM were erroneous and seditious.*

*The book was withdrawn on Wednesday upon Cabinet instruction.*

*Meanwhile, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said Mustapa and his deputy Datuk Ong Tee Keat should be reassigned to another ministry for mishandling the matter.*

*Until the Cabinet instructed UPM to withdraw the module, Mustapa had refused to do so, insisting the context was based on facts,'Lim said in a statement today.*

*He said Mustapa and Ong or the university administrators could have decided to withdraw the book, not waiting for the cabinet to step in.*

*--- end ---*