

76 religious schools fail safety inspection

KOTA BARU: Seventy-six of the 2,428 religious institutions inspected nationwide failed safety standards of the Fire and Rescue Services Department.

Fire and Rescue Services Department deputy director-general Datuk Soiman Jahid said notices were issued to the affected premises, including tahfiz schools, to take immediate measures to meet the safety requirement.

"We are inspecting the schools in stages. So far we have inspected 228 institutions and found 152 of them complying with safety standards, while the rest failed," he said at an event organised by the Kelantan Islamic Religious Council to raise awareness on safety in the wake of the Darul Quran Ittifaqiyah fire that killed 23.

It was attended by more than 700 religious school operators.

Soiman said a full report would be given to the Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Ministry on Oct 19 after checks were conducted on all registered and unregistered religious institutions in the country, adding that stern warnings were issued to those who failed to provide alternative fire exits.

"Cooking areas should not be too close to living quarters. We have inspected the schools and given them the appropriate advice. Overcrowding is also not allowed," he said.

Of the institutions inspected, 1,209 were Sekolah Agama Rakyat, followed by tahfiz schools (929) and pondok schools (290).



Valuable know-how: A pupil putting out a controlled fire while being monitored by fire safety officials at a religious school. — Bernama