

MP doubts PSD will implement Najib directives
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A DAP parliamentarian has lauded Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's announcement of granting highly-coveted Public Service Department (PSD) at pre-university level.

In welcoming the move, Tony Pua (DAP-Petaling Jaya Utara) described it as a way to "resolve the perennial scholarship conundrum".

Every year many top ranking students complain of double standards in the awarding of PSD scholarships to students excelling in their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) exams.

Pua said the party's youth leadership under Anthony Loke (DAP-Rasah) had been pursuing the matter since 2009.

"Even way back in 2006 the then Higher Education Minister Mustapa Mohamed (right) had announced that the government will only continue to award overseas scholarships to students who are able to gain entry into ivy league universities," said Pua.

So, the question remains if the PSD will comply and implement Najib's directives, he added.

"Since the PSD has been unable implement such reforms over the past four or five years, why would next year be any different?" he asked.

He also urged the government not to wait until next year for the implementation until the "circus" repeats itself.

Laying down the conditions

"Announce the details of the new scholarship policy so that the public and particularly, the potential scholarship recipients know what is in store for them," Pua added.

Najib, in a radio interview this morning said that a review of the PSD scholarships is underway and the new system will be introduced next year.

He said that providing university grants for high achievers for SPM was "not a good idea" as it does not guarantee that the same students will perform well for pre-university examinations such as the A-levels.

Instead, the new system would only provide scholarships for those who have been accepted by top universities overseas and in the meantime SPM aces would be given "a small bursary" to continue their foundation studies locally.

Pua said: "Subsequently, the government should announce a full list of top universities and colleges, where the courses will be accepted for overseas universities scholarship consideration, whether it's economics in Cambridge or engineering at MIT or medicine in Melbourne."

He pointed out that "transparency" in the awarding process will ensure that the government regains the "credibility and prestige" of the PSD sponsorship.

Otherwise, it will be another case of just rhetoric with little or no action, ending up with the same fiasco next year, he added.