

DAP raps 'small-minded' education minister
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An opposition MP has described Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin as the “most blinkered education minister ever” for continuing to insist that Malaysian education system is highly rated.

NONE In a statement issued today, Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua (right) said despite being ridiculed two weeks ago for claiming the country has a better education system than Britain, the US and Germany, Muhyiddin continues to praise lavishly the Malaysian education system.

Muhyiddin had cited a recent survey by Introspek Asia, which revealed that 55 percent of Malaysian adults believe the nation’s education system is comparable to other countries, while 35 percent said it is “better than that of developed countries”.

“This finding is interesting as it reflects a positive attitude among a majority of Malaysians toward our education system,” he said in his keynote address at the Asian Strategy and Learning Institute’s 16th Malaysian education summit on Monday.

However, Pua revealed that the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu), the main driver of the Government Transformation Programme, has accepted the fact that our education system clearly lags behind most other countries.

Drop in science, math rankings

“Tengku Nurul Azian, the education National Key Result Area director has highlighted that based on the Programme for International Students Assessment (Pisa) 2009 study, Malaysian students were ranked in the bottom 30 percent when tested against students from 74 countries on a radio programme yesterday evening.

“In terms of reading literacy, we were ranked a poor 55th. In mathematics literacy, it was 57th and faring only marginally better in science at 52nd,” said Pua.

NONENot only that, the DAP national publicity secretary pointed out that Muhyiddin (left) has intentionally chosen to ignore another more comprehensive study which proved that the standard of education outcome has continuously declined over the past decade.

“In probably the world’s most comprehensive study on student performance (13-14 years’ old) and related factors for mathematics and science - Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (Timms), the results in 1999, 2003 and 2007 showed a drastic decline in scores and rankings,” he claimed.

According to Timms, Malaysia’s score for mathematics declined from 508 to 474 points between 2003 and 2007. The 34-point drop was the highest suffered among 60 countries.

By comparing 2007 with 1999, the drop of 45 points was also the second highest in the study.

Similarly for science, Malaysia’s score dropped the highest by 40 points from 510 to 471 from 2003 to 2007.

From 1999 to 2007, Malaysia suffered a drop of 22 points, which was the second highest among all the countries studied.

Pua further elaborated that while the latest Pisa study conducted in 2010 showed that Malaysia ranked lowly in the world, the Timms data over 1999, 2003 and 2007 proved that the standard in education has

been declining consistently and drastically over the past decade.

“The next Timms report for 2011 is expected to be published later this year and we can only hope against hope that there will no longer be any bad news,” added Pua.

Instead of sounding the alarm bells and taking urgent action to arrest the decline in our education standard, Muhyiddin has chosen to lavishly praise our outstanding education system as an example of the BN government’s impeccable leadership.

“This clearly demonstrates that our education minister is completely blinkered and chooses only to believe and rely on highly questionable survey reports.

“If he continues to remain blinkered as he has over the past two weeks, then perhaps it is better that the Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak find a better replacement minister,” he added.

Pua called upon Muhyiddin to provide his views on the internationally accredited studies on Malaysia’s standard of education and to publish all the recommendations made by Pemandu to ensure all the recommended measures have been or are being implemented.

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