

Muhyiddin told to end varsity ranking boycott

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Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, must direct Universiti Malaya and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia to end their boycott of the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings, says DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang.

In the 2014 ranking released on Thursday, Malaysia's public varsities still failed to make the top 200 while UM and UKM were left out as they refused to participate in the ranking following their repeated poor performance.

"Muhyiddin should stop all this 'make belief' about Malaysia's prowess as an educational superpower.

"(He) should initiate a review of the policy to end the boycott of UM and UKM in the annual THE World University Rankings to demonstrate our seriousness in wanting to restore the international reputation and academic excellence of Malaysian universities," said Lim (left) in a statement today.

He also rubbished UM's justification that it had opted out of the ranking as it lacked resources to compete with other universities as "not holding water and unacceptable".

He pointed out that much newer universities such as South Korea's Pohang University of Science and Technology founded in 1986 and Hong Kong's University of Science and Technology founded in 1991 could still make to the top 200.

"Unless there can be good and proper reasons, which should be fully made public, Muhyiddin should ensure that UM and UKM participate in the annual THE Top 400 World University Rankings," he said.

Varsity entry woes

On a related matter, Seputeh MP Teresa Kok called on Deputy Education Minister Mary Yap to explain her remarks that many top scorers were turned away from universities because of their poor performance during the oral interview.

Yap (right) had said yesterday that some candidates who scored 10As were not even able to name the prime minister.

"If the Education Ministry wants the public and students to accept the explanation, it should be more transparent and reveal more details on how applicants failed in their interview, rather than citing an extreme and isolated case."

However, if many top scores have failed their oral interviews just like the case cited by Mary Yap... then the ,ministry must look into the bigger question of the weakness that exists in our education system.

"Why is our education system producing top scorers who are bookworms?" said Kok.

She added that the standard of education both at the secondary school and university levels must improve to meet the country's ambition to become a developed nation.

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