

We send kids to national schools, KJ tells Dr M
MalaysiaKini.com
Nov 19, 2014

Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said many cabinet ministers, including himself, send their children to national schools, and not to private or international schools.

Khairy, who is also Umno Youth chief, said those who send their children to national schools included Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said even he, himself, sends his children to national schools, not to private or international schools.

"I send my son to a national school. I think most ministers that I know...also send their children to national schools.

"There is a perception that ministers send their children to private or international schools, but most ministers I know send their children to national schools.

"Even the education minister sends his children to national schools. I do not know where this perception comes from," Khairy told a press conference at his ministry in Putrajaya today.

He said this when asked about former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's blog posting.

Mahathir, who was the country's fourth prime minister, had noted that there was a growing wealth and education gap among the rich and poor in the country and that he noticed that most ministers send their children to private schools.

'Education gap widening'

Khairy, who is widely referred to as KJ, admitted that the education gap among the rich and poor was widening as the country practises an open education policy.

He said the open education policy practised in the country has resulted in those going to private and international schools not interacting with their counterparts who go to national schools.

"Will this lead to an education gap?"

"Certainly, there will be a gap as those who go to private schools would not mix with those going to national schools.

"Those who go to Chinese schools will not interact with those who go to national schools.

"However, this is what we face with the education policy. We have chosen to practise an open education policy and this is one of the repercussions or effects," Khairy said.

As such, the Rembau MP hoped that the implementation of the National Education Blueprint would help reduce the gap between the rich and the poor in the education system.

"The Education Ministry has tabled its blueprint and the objective is to improve the education system in the national school, so that it becomes the choice for parents and students.

"If the blueprint is successful, I am confident more people will go to national schools," he said.

Kamalanathan plays safe

In comparison with Khairy, Deputy Education Minister II P Kamalanathan played safe and refused to give further comments on this matter.

Asked to respond Mahathir's statement that "private and international schools widen the gap between rich and poor", Kamalanathan said as he hasn't yet read the former's statement, he thus will have to "study the statement before I give my view".

The journalist then turned to question him on Mahathir's claim that most of the ministers sent their children to private and international schools, he again brushed aside the question.

"How can I comment on other people's issues? You must ask them," he answered in a press conference in Putrajaya after attending the Patrol Dengue Programme 2014.

"I don't have children, God hasn't blessed me with children," he said when the journalist asked where his children are schooling.

Replying to Mahathir's claim that the national education policy is populist, the minister also appeared to be extremely discreet.

"The Education Blueprint 2013-2025 will look at all aspects, and we know that the plan's success will further succeed and lift up our education level. What is most important is that all are involved to ensure that national education development is successful."

However, Kamalanathan told reporters, "God bless you, send your children to a Malaysian school", before leaving the press conference.

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