

DPM: Mandarin, Tamil languages for public schools
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The government wants to make it compulsory for national schools to have Mandarin and Tamil language teachers, said Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said national schools already had a policy of providing such teachers so that pupils' own language (POL) classes could be held at all national schools.

Muhyiddin, who is also Education Minister, said the teaching of both the mother tongue was contained in the ministry's policy but had yet to be fully implemented in national schools.

"The national language and English are important but we should also study our mother tongue to facilitate communication," he said when opening the convention of the Federal Territory People's Progressive Party (PPP) at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), Kuala Lumpur, yesterday.

Muhyiddin was responding to a request by PPP president M Kayveas for the government to consider making Tamil and Mandarin compulsory subjects in schools.

In his welcoming speech at the function, Kayveas urged the government to also review the system of disbursing Public Service Department (PSD) scholarships to outstanding students.

Muhyiddin said the government realised the importance of students studying their mother tongue because, besides using it to gain knowledge, they could enhance understanding among the races in the country and enable them to appreciate one another's values, arts and culture.

On scholarships, he said the government would look into the matter so that outstanding students were not neglected.

He said students should be given the opportunity to pursue education up to tertiary level, either through the awarding of scholarships or provision of loans.

"This was raised in the Cabinet. We will look at improving the situation," he said.

Muhyiddin also said that the government was sensitive to the needs of welfare and development at schools, especially national-type schools, aided schools, people's religious schools and missionary schools.

He said the government had allocated RM40 million to meet the cost of utilities at all these four categories of school.

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