

Govt flexible on Chinese education, says Hisham

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EDUCATION Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein says the government remains flexible in its policy on Chinese education, making adjustments to suit changing times, *Sin Chew Daily* reported yesterday.

He said Malaysia had its set of education measures when it gained independence.

Later on, he said, there were other formulae and at present, because of the different circumstances, there needed to be flexibility in education to keep pace with the times.

Hishammuddin, who is on a week-long official visit to China, said this when asked about the government's policy on Chinese education during an interview with *China Today* magazine in Beijing on Sunday.

Malaysia is the only country outside China and Taiwan where the Chinese education is complete.

Hishammuddin said when Malaysia had just achieved independence, having a single education system was very important for all Malaysians to work together to build the nation.

However, today, the country deems the

multi-stream education system – having Chinese, Tamil and religious schools – as an advantage.

He said the fact that Malaysians can speak Mandarin and learn the Chinese language is a strong point for the country.

But this also has its political sensitivities which can only be handled and overcome by a leadership which is sincere in facing such sensitivities, he said.

And he believed it is a problem that could be overcome.

He said that at present, his ministry was identifying the best from all streams of schools to enable the country to compete globally.

“We don't have a huge population like China does, as such (we) need to seek out the best schools among the various streams of schools,” he said.

Hishammuddin expressed his admiration for the Chinese leaders for their leadership quality.

“I find it difficult to handle 10,000 schools, and I cannot imagine how the Chinese leaders manage the huge student population because for primary education alone, China has 400,000 schools,” he said.

On the subject of Chinese language in national schools, Hishammuddin said it would go a long way in this area if Malaysia can get the assistance of the Chinese government.