

DATE: 1/7/2010

'Speed up POL teacher intake'

PUTRAJAYA: Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said yesterday he had instructed the Education Department to speed up the intake of Mandarin and Tamil language teachers under the Pupil's Own Language (POL) programme in national schools.

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, said he had asked the director-general of education, Tan Sri Alimuddin Mohd Dom, to increase the recruitment of these teachers for all 7,000 national schools.

Speaking at a dialogue after delivering a speech at the Perdana Dis-

course Series entitled "The Role of Education in Leadership Development" here, Muhyiddin admitted that it would not be possible to fill all the vacancies for POL teachers within a short period.

He also said the teaching of Mandarin and Tamil in national schools was not compulsory.

However, having the POL policy could convince parents to send their children to national schools, he said.

The POL policy was introduced in 2006 to make government schools more attractive to non-Malays and to accommodate the learning of mother

tongues with the aim of promoting unity.

At the moment, there are 373 Mandarin and 163 Tamil language teachers in national schools who are appointed under the policy.

During the dialogue, a participant asked why the country adopted a multiple stream system instead of a single stream system.

Muhyiddin said it was a legacy inherited from the past and that a prolonged debate on the matter could create more confusion.

Earlier in his speech, Muhyiddin said there was a need to provide

quality education that would produce visionary, effective and capable leaders.

He said good education was one that harnessed the full potential of an individual intellectually, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

"Education, therefore, is a holistic process of developing the right potential in each individual."

Muhyiddin said as the country urgently needed to produce the right human capital that would drive its economy to the next level of development, it could no longer rely on the old ways of doing things.

"We have to move forward and take bold steps to reform our education so that it will deliver the desired goal of transforming Malaysia into a high-income nation by 2020.

"We need to re-evaluate our curriculum and the way we assess students' progress and achievements," he said, adding that an effective and holistic system of assessment must be put in place to allow teachers to identify and nurture those with potential.

"If we fail to identify and nurture the potential of our young people, we run the risk of failing the nation in future." — Bernama