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Intake of Mandarin, Tamil teachers to be speeded up

PUTRAJAYA: Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said yesterday he has 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 yesterday he had also asked Education Ministry director-general Tan Sri Alimuddin Mohd Dom to increase the recruitment of these teachers to fully implement the policy at all 7,000 national schools.

Speaking at a dialogue after delivering a speech at the Perdana Discourse Series titled "The Role of Education in Leadership Development" here, he admitted 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 language in national schools is not compulsory.

However, having the POL policy could convince parents from the respective communities to send their children to national schools due to the quality of teaching for both languages in these schools, he said.

The POL policy was launched in 2006 to make government schools more attractive to non-Malays and to accommodate the learning of mother tongue languages with the aim of promoting unity.

There are currently 373 Mandarin and 163 Tamil language teachers in national schools, 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 the matter could create more confusion.

"There is nothing wrong with our education system because it's all there."

Earlier, he said there was a need to provide quality education that would produce visionary, effective and capable leaders.

He said good education is 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 and every individual," he said.

Muhyiddin said that as the country urgently needs to produce the right human capital that would drive its economy into 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 the year 2020. We need to re-evaluate our curriculum and the way we assess students' progress and achievement." - Bernama