

DAP dissatisfied with temporary PPSMI fix
The Malaysian Insider
November 07, 2011
By Debra Chong

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 7 — The DAP wants the Education Ministry to decide once and for all its policy on the medium of instruction for mathematics and science in national schools to enhance the country's future global competitiveness.

Party adviser Lim Kit Siang lauded today Putrajaya's move to continue the teaching of maths and science in English — better known by its Malay acronym PPSMI — until the current batch of students complete their secondary school education, but warned that it was only a short-term fix.

"It is not a satisfactory long-term solution to address the problems of raising the standards of English, mathematics and science among our students so that Malaysia can enhance its international competitiveness with the rest of the world," the Ipoh-Timur MP said in a statement.

Dr Marie Aimee Tourres, a senior research fellow in Universiti Malaya's department of development studies, was reported as saying Malaysian graduates were less marketable than their regional peers due to a poor command of the English language.

"In Pakistan, although the people speak different dialects next to the Urdu language, their English is better than our graduates," she was quoted as saying by English daily The Star.

Former Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was also reported as urging the government to be less fickle-minded on education policies to avoid troubling the younger generation.

Lim warned the ruling Barisan Nasional government that without a fully-planned permanent solution, the education policy is likely to come back and haunt it in future.

He said the ongoing row to replace PPSMI with a pro-Bahasa Malaysia policy was a result of the government's headlong rush to introduce it to national schools in 2002.

He said that teachers, especially those in based in rural national schools, were ill-prepared to teach the two subjects in English.

The pro-English policy for maths and science was mooted by then-Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad towards the end of his term in 2003, to steer Malaysia forward on the path to innovation.

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