

**Muhyiddin: More Mandarin language teachers in national schools**  
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**By Melissa Chi**

PETALING JAYA, Dec 5 — Putrajaya can add more Mandarin teachers at national schools for students interested in studying it as a third language, says Education Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

The deputy prime minister said last night it was important to preserve Mandarin as a native language, especially since it has been accepted as an international language.

"Malaysians have Bahasa Malaysia as the first language, then English as the second language, it would be better if we have a good command in Mandarin as our third language as well," Muhyiddin (picture) said at the 20th anniversary dinner of the Federation of Chinese Associations of Malaysia (Huazhong) at the One World Hotel here.

He said the Barisan Nasional government was always sensitive to the needs of the Chinese community, particularly in education.

"It will be our loss if our mother tongue, such as Mandarin and Tamil, are not preserved without the support from the government. The BN government is a pragmatic one," he said.

Also present were Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong, Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai, Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen, and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

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