

Guan Eng calls Muhyiddin's education claim 'preposterous'
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 1 — Lim Guan Eng has ridiculed the deputy prime minister's claim that the standard of local education is superior to that of Britain, the United States and Germany, calling the statement so "preposterous" that "even a primary school student won't believe" it.

The Penang chief minister pointed out that while British, American and German universities are widely acknowledged to be among the best in the world, not a single Malaysian university had made it into the top 200 global rankings.

Lim today said the DPM is in denial about the problems that exist in the local education system. — file pic

"I don't know on what basis he is saying that our education system is better than the UK, US and Germany's...", he told reporters in George Town today.

"If that is the case, why are all our students going to the UK, US and Germany to study? Why is it no students from the UK, US and Germany are coming to Malaysia to study?"

Lim, who is also DAP secretary-general, said that Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin should take steps to improve sliding academic standards rather than remain in denial.

"If you deny there are problems, then no action will be taken... and there are real problems," the Bagan MP stressed.

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, said yesterday a report by the World Economic Forum (WEF) stated that Malaysian students were getting a better education than their counterparts in Britain, the US and Germany.

He pointed out that the WEF's 2011/12 Global Competitiveness Report ranked Malaysia 14th among 142 countries in terms of quality of education.

The deputy prime minister was quoting findings in the Executive Opinion Survey portion of the report, which polled top business figures on the competitiveness of various sectors and institutions.

According to the survey, the number of executives polled for Malaysia was 87.

The respondents were asked to rank how well the Malaysian education system met the needs of a competitive economy on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being "not well at all" and 7 being "very well" but they were not asked to rank the country in comparison to others.

Malaysia achieved a weighted average score of 5.1, as did Australia, Lebanon and Barbados.

Switzerland, Singapore and Finland led the rankings after each secured a rating of 5.9.

Germany placed 17th with a score of 4.9, Britain came in 20th with 4.8 and the US took the 26th spot with a 4.7 rating.

Despite Malaysia placing 14th, the WEF report said in its summary for Malaysia that as the country becomes increasingly innovation-driven, "it will need to improve its performance in education and technological readiness".

"In terms of higher education and training (38th), improving access remains a priority in light of low enrolment rates of 69 per cent (101st) and 36 per cent (66th) for secondary and tertiary education, respectively," it said.

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