

Parliament: Government Never Cheats Rakyat In Terms Of Education - Muhyiddin Bernama
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 27 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the Barisan Nasional (BN) government has never cheated the people in terms of education.

Describing the allegation made by M. Kulasegaran (DAP-Ipoh Barat) as unfounded, he explained that the matriculation quota of 1,500 for Indian students had actually been used up during the academic session for this year and the previous year.

"The government has never cheated the rakyat, it was a wild allegation especially on the commitment made by the government.

"So, if he wants to know whether the ministry's commitment to provide 1,500 places for Indian students to enter the matriculation programme has been fulfilled, the answer is yes. It (the quota) was filled last year. In fact, this year too has been filled," Muhyiddin said during question time at the Dewan Rakyat Thursday.

Muhyiddin, who is also the Education Minister, was responding to the supplementary question from Kulasegaran who, among other things, claimed that the Indian community had not received benefits and had been deceived by the promises made by the government.

In February last year, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had agreed to increase the number of places for Indian students to follow the pre-university course by another 1,000 to the earlier allocation of 559 places.

Muhyiddin explained that the ministry had to reduce the percentage for eligibility to fill the quota promised because some of those who had applied had not met the criteria especially in terms of the qualification percentage.

The Deputy Prime Minister said he had to disclose the information so that the government would not be accused of reneging on the promise and commitment made.

"I want to mention here that we had to clarify that out of several thousands of students who had applied for the matriculation programme, we had screened (the applications) and some of them were said to have failed to fulfil the qualification criteria.

"In order to fulfil the quota, we had to bring down the qualification percentage which is usually between 92 and 95 per cent...I have to mention this in the house, because we want to fulfil the pledge even though they are actually not that qualified in terms of competency and performance," he said.

Referring to the merger of the Higher Education Ministry and the Education Ministry earlier, Muhyiddin said the move would give a significant impact in coordinating and scrutinising the Malaysia Education Blueprint (PPPM) 2013-2025 and the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (PSPTN) 2007-2020.

Muhyiddin said the more comprehensive improvements and realignment that would be implemented would involve emphasis on the access, quality, equity, solidarity and efficiency, including the conclusion of the review on the PSPTN by the end of the year.

He said the PSPTN, which was formulated in a comprehensive and holistic manner, aimed to empower higher education and would be implemented in four phases through seven strategic thrusts such as widening access and raising equity, and improving the quality of education and learning.

"The strategic thrusts also embrace efforts to strengthen research and innovations, empower the institutions of higher learning, intensifying internationalisation, developing life-long learning and strengthening the delivery system for the higher education sector," he said responding to the original question from Datuk Abd Aziz Sheikh Fadzir (BN-Kulim Bandar Baharu).

He said that 23 Critical Agenda Projects had been created across seven PSPTN strategic thrusts as a catalyst to boost higher education, where the amendment to the Universities and University Colleges Act (AUKU) 1971, which was gazetted on June 22 last year, was among the achievements made.

At the same time, Muhyiddin explained that efforts to strengthen integration between the ethnic groups in the education system had been given special emphasis in the PPPM through the third shift and specific programmes at the higher education level as well as the PSPTN Critical Agenda Projects.

"Thus, the cooperation and support of everyone regardless of their political ideology, socio-economic, educational, religious and racial background were most needed so that this aspiration could be realised without ignoring the principles of the Rukun Negara and Federal Constitution," he said when replying to a question from Datuk Mohd Johari Baharom (BN-Kubang Pasu).

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