

**PPPM And PSPTN To Be Incorporated Under One Master Plan, Says Muhyiddin Yassin
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BANGI, Sept 19 (Bernama)--- The Malaysia Education Blueprint (PPPM) and National Higher Education Strategic Plan (PSPTN) would be incorporated under one master plan next year to facilitate the development of national education, said Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

According to the deputy prime minister, the decision was made following the merger of the Education Ministry and the Higher Education Ministry as Education Ministry.

"With the merger of the two ministries, it is hoped that no parties will be worried or feel doubtful that higher education will receive less priority than education at the basic level," he said.

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, was speaking at a Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) goodwill gathering, here, Thursday.

He said the merger should be seen as a continuity right from pre-school to tertiary education.

"I assure that we will give due attention to the development of public university autonomy," he said.

Muhyiddin said public universities had been told to put up plans to ensure they were truly autonomous from the aspects of finance, planning and other matters.

Touching on the concern over a possible glut of medical graduates, he said at the moment, in terms of population to doctor ratio, Malaysia was still in need of more doctors including medical specialists.

"Nonetheless, in the next two to three years, based on the total from both public and private universities, the number of graduates in this field will be higher than the projection by the Health Ministry," he said.

Muhyiddin said a moratorium had been placed by the ministry as the government did not want to see both public and private universities providing too many places in medicine to prevent a glut of such graduates.

On free education, he said education in Malaysia was almost free on the whole.

"This is because with government financial assistance starting from pre-school to university, 90 per cent of the cost of education is borne by the government.

"Comparatively, the fees charged by private universities for the same course may be 10 times higher than at public universities as the cost for the latter is largely taken up by the government," Muhyiddin said.

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