

**Master plan needed for world-class universities, DAP tells
Putrajaya
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Putrajaya should present a Higher Education masterplan at the next Parliament sitting in October detailing efforts to produce at least two world-class universities by 2020, said the DAP in light of the abysmal standards of local tertiary institutions compared with their counterparts in the region.

DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang (pic) said the onus is on Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin to come out with such a plan to prevent local universities from sliding down world rankings and making international headlines as recruiting grounds for terrorists.

"If Najib and Muhyiddin are serious in wanting to achieve the objective of Malaysia becoming a developed nation by 2020, then it is all the more imperative that they ensure that Malaysia can produce two world-class universities by 2020, for there is no country in the world that has achieved developed status without first producing world-class universities," he said in a statement today, referring to prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Local English daily The Star reported yesterday that Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi confirmed foreigners were using colleges and universities to recruit and indoctrinate potential militants.

Zahid said the police are monitoring the recruitment of militants in local tertiary institutions, a week after police revealed they were hunting down a Universiti Malaya (UM) lecturer for suspected militant activities.

On July 2, police revealed that Dr Mahmud Ahmad, a senior lecturer with UM's Department of Akidah and Islamic Thought, the Academy of Islamic Studies, was among five individuals wanted for militant activities.

A graduate of the International Islamic University in Islamabad, Pakistan, Mahmud has been identified as the person who recruited the first Malaysian suicide bomber Ahmad Tarmimi Maliki.

Lim said the admission had catapulted Malaysian universities to unwanted national and international attention.

"Instead of producing world-class universities in keeping with the Vision 2020 objective to achieve developed nation status, Malaysian universities have for the past decade been a national embarrassment, annually confirming the absence of world-class universities in the country," he said.

He was referring to Malaysian universities abysmal performance in international education rankings.

For the second year in a row, Malaysia failed to get on the list of the Times Higher Education Top 100 Universities under 50 years old, although four Asian universities made it to the top 10 – two from South Korea and one each from Hong Kong and Singapore.

In Malaysia, all the public universities except for University of Malaya, are under 50 years old.

Malaysia was also excluded from the Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings 2014 for the Top 100 Universities, although 14 universities from Asia were included – five from Japan, two from Singapore, three from South Korea, one from China, two from Hong Kong and one from Taiwan.

In the Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2014 released last month, Malaysia was not among the top 100 Asian universities.

"This is most shameful and mortifying for Malaysians as in the 50s and 60s, University of Malaya was one of the world-class universities comparable in academic excellence with universities like Universities of Hong Kong, Melbourne and Sydney," said the Gelang Patah MP. – July 13, 2014.

- See more at: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/masterplan-needed-for-world-class-universities-dap-tells-putrajaya#sthash.EAiV4Uee.dpuf>

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