

Special schools for undocumented M'sians in Sabah

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KOTA KINABALU: Special schools will soon be set up for undocumented Malaysians in Sabah, said Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik (pic).



He said the government would also help these undocumented Malaysian students get their identification documents.

"They are actually Malaysians. They are children of Malaysians. The only thing is they were not documented properly due to

certain reasons only known to their parents. So we are not only opening our schools for them but also facilitating them to be documented. What we are doing is trying to make all these Malaysian children documented."

Earlier he said the visit to Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) on Thursday was to have a townhall meeting with an estimated 5,000 students and academic staff to share with them his aspirations regarding the direction of the country's higher education system.

"We also want to increase the industrial relations of UMS where we will bring more industries to work with UMS as it has a lot of potential." He said this is because UMS has a large natural area which can be potentially developed as a tourism product to provide jobs for students.

"Also we seek to increase the collaboration of UMS at the international level.

Now we are doing collaborations with universities from China and I will work with UMS administrators to do collaborations with Japanese and European (universities).

"UMS has the potential to be competitive at not only the Asean but also International level."

Maszlee said they are also committed to get more Asean students to study at UMS and intend to make UMS graduates be highly employable marketable.

"This is something we are confident of achieving together with the university administration under the new UMS vice chancellor," he said.

Meanwhile, Sabah is getting additional RM15 million from the Federal Education Ministry for maintenance and minor repairs of all government schools in the State, for this year.

Dr Maszlee said the allocation, which would be channelled to the State Education Department, is to enhance school infrastructure in Sabah. He said this is also to ensure Putrajaya and in states like Sabah and Sarawak enjoy same quality of education and to be realised.

"We do not want Sabah to lag behind in education development and we want to ensure the school children and youths in the State would succeed.

"The government's commitment is to ensure each Malaysian is not only given opportunity to learn and acquire knowledge but also to equip him or her to use existing opportunities to go forward which is part of a vision of mutual prosperity that we have pointed out.

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Number of dilapidated schools being identified

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"Hence, the government would continue to work with the State Government via the Education and Innovation Ministry to enhance quality education in Sabah and further improve schools' condition in the State," he said, after a working visit to Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) Kg Brunei, Membakut, Thursday.

He also presented a mock cheque of RM15 million to Sabah Education director Dr Mistirine Radin while witnessed by Education and Innovation Minister Datuk Dr Yusof Yacob, Membakut assemblyman cum Bersatu Membakut Divisional Chief Datuk Mohd Arifin Mohd Arif, Papar MP Ahmad Hassan, and Lumadan assemblyman Matbali Musah.

Dr Maszlee also announced that the ministry had allocated RM40,000 to be spent on minor infrastructures and electrical work at SK Kg Brunei.

In addition, the government has approved funding to build a new school block for SK Kg Brunei that consists of six classrooms, administration office, science room, toilets and other facilities, in which the construction will begin next year.

As for the amount of cost for building the new block, Dr Maszlee said the total funds for such project would be made known, next year. He said his ministry will also contribute publication of books from Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka to resource centres in all school libraries in Membakut.

To a question, Dr Maszlee said Sabah Education Department will finalise number of dilapidated schools in Sabah that are in dire need of repairing and upgrading which his ministry is awaiting from the department.

He said the government via his ministry would provide the funds based on the

needs of the schools either for repairing, upgrading or building a new building or blocks.

Membakut Assemblyman Datuk Mohd Arifin bin Mohd Arif told reporters he felt honoured that Dr Maszlee visited the school (SK Kg Brunei) and will look into several issues pertaining to wooden schools, dilapidated and unsafe schools here.

He said he has also applied for an integrated school in Kg Mawao, which is run by Datuk Gulam Hassan, to be made as a government-aided Islamic school (SABK).

He said the pupils are learning academic subjects for the national exam UPSR, Islamic education and memorising Al-Quran (Tahfiz) which need to be registered under the Education Ministry to become SABK so the school could obtain government aid.