

Plan to
link top
schools
in region

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KUALA LUMPUR: Top-notch schools may see themselves being linked to other well-known schools in the Southeast Asian region.

The linkage will be between the cream of the "clusters of excellence" schools and equally reputable schools in Asean countries.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said he hoped to discuss the plan with other Asean education ministers at the upcoming 42nd Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (Seameo) Council Conference and the 2nd Asean Education Ministers Meeting in Bali, Indonesia.

"In today's borderless world, our students do not only compete among themselves in Malaysia, but also with those in the international community," he said.

The ministry has identified 30 schools in the country to be linked with 24 schools from the region.

"I am confident the activities and programmes organised by these schools will help to produce excellent students and individuals in terms of academic performance and co-curricular activities.

"It will also encourage leadership, teamwork, creativity, patriotism and global-mindedness and a competitive spirit."

The co-operation could work through formal and informal sharing of information, including communicating on the Internet.

Programmes, meanwhile, could include student and teacher exchange.

"We hope that through these standards and markers, the cluster schools will prepare themselves to achieve higher goals and learn from the examples set by these international schools," he said.

The "cluster school" concept was mooted last year as the sixth thrust of the National Education Blueprint, which is aimed at boosting the excellence of education institutions.

The ministry will identify 300 of such schools and by the end of this month, will list several of them.

Hishammuddin was yesterday elected vice-president of Seameo.

Indonesian Education Minister Bambang Sudibyo was elected the president.

Hishammuddin said it was an honour for Malaysia as well as for him that came with a huge responsibility which involved exploring new ideas to promote the education sector in the region.

"The appointment comes with a huge responsibility and is proof that we are highly respected by our neighbours, particularly in education advancement," he said.