

# Pass in English a must

EDUCATION MINISTRY WANTS TO MAKE IT COMPULSORY FOR SPM CANDIDATES

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Education Ministry wants to make a pass in English compulsory for students to obtain their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who is also education minister, said the government wanted to ensure students who complete Form 5 “are well-versed in the English language”.

“The ministry is currently working on the proposal and is in the midst of getting public feedback. We want the public to give their feedback on whether passing English in SPM should be compulsory for students to receive their certificate,” he said.

He said it was important for Malaysian students to be conversant in English, especially if they “are furthering their studies”.

He added that it was also in line with the ministry’s objective to stop the declining standard of the English language among students.

“We are also mindful of the fact that many school leavers with SPM have difficulty grasping the English language, which is the dominant language of commerce, science and information technology,” he said yesterday after opening the Alumni Maktab Kirkby Association Malaysia’s annual general meeting.

In Cyberjaya, former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said making it compulsory for students to pass English in order to get the SPM was a good move for their future.

“It will prepare them for globalisation and stand a better chance at securing jobs. (At the end of the day,) it is up to parents to decide because it concerns the future of their children, not that of the government.

“Without a strong command of the language, it will be difficult for them to study abroad or secure good jobs as they would be required to be able to converse well in the international language,” he said after receiving an Honorary Doctorate of Humanity from the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (page 5).

He said those who opposed the proposal were interested in only political mileage and not in education.

“They are not interested in (our children’s) education or acquiring knowledge, all they want to do is to see how much support they can get. I am afraid if they do that (reject the stress on English), the country will go to the dogs,” he added.

On the government’s pending decision on the teaching and learning of Science and Maths in English, Mahathir said he would feel sorry if the government decided to revert to Bahasa Malaysia. “If that is the case, in future, all Malays and Malaysians will be *bodoh*,” he said.

