

Don't stunt our growth by sidelining English, private sector tells Putrajaya

MEF says English remains the language of trade, commerce and graduates good in English help them grow further.



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MEF president Datuk Syed Hussain Syed Husman says the lower command of the English language will be detrimental for Malaysians to compete globally.

SHAH ALAM - Bosses have reminded Putrajaya that English remains the language of trade and commerce and every country is pushing its citizens to speak well in English.

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) president Datuk Syed Hussain Syed Husman said that those with good command of English earn higher as they help companies succeed globally, they are able to negotiate for better terms in agreements and help build lasting relationships.

"Without English, we cannot comprehend the language of commerce.

"In fact, we should be encouraging Malaysians to be multi-lingual with at least three to four languages," he said.

This comes as Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob 's administration pushes Malay at every official function.

Syed Hussain said if the private sector needs to use interpreters or 3rd parties they may risk losing the essence of the business

"It must be emphasised that a good command of English is important for international trade," he said, adding that terms and references for any given project are in English.

"If employees do not have a good command of English, they will not be able to understand and ensure employers get a good deal," he said.

He said students and employees should be encouraged to enhance their English language skills as poor language skills is causing employers harder to find graduates that are suitable for the company's requirements.

"MEF is proposing for Putrajaya to relook and implement the spirit of Federal Constitution where Malay is the national language and English given the provision as the official language. He said focusing on Malay should not be done at the expense of neglecting the English language.

"The constitution also allows other languages as equal opportunity to grow and be developed," he said.

Reflecting on the steps taken by Putrajaya in 2003, owing to globalisation pressure and the need for English language proficiency among students, he said English was reinstated as the medium for Science and Mathematics. However, this was withdrawn in 2009.

MEF's survey on employers' requirement

Based on MEF's survey on salaries of executives for 2021, he said the top five skills that employers valued were communication skills and good command of the English language.

"In a situation where the job market is not only in Malaysia but will be in regional and international marketplace, the lower command of the English language will be detrimental for Malaysians to compete at the global level," he said.

Due to this, Syed Hussain said the government should take appropriate steps to enhance the teaching of the English language as businesses are being conducted in English globally.

"The ability to use English in the workplace has a number of benefits from helping the employer.

"The constitution also allows other languages as equal opportunity to grow and be developed," he said.

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