

PANEL OF ADVISERS

EDUCATION REVAMP NEEDS NEW IDEAS

THE education system is under close scrutiny. Everyone has something negative to say about it. Educationists, too, have joined the fray.

The education minister, who has promised to overhaul the system, is under a lot of pressure to deliver.

In a WhatsApp group, of which I am a member, strong words about the many years of abuse are common.

All are calling for a revamp, not only at the primary and secondary levels, but also the tertiary level.

The minister has expressed disgust at universities' obsession with rankings, oftentimes neglecting the national agenda.

Nothing, however, has been submitted for the attention of the ministry.

Even the appointments of advisory panel members attracted

unfounded criticism.

Such critics may have failed to recognise the fact that past policies, which they have also been critical of, were developed by education experts.

It may be time for people to think outside the box. The minister has been holding discussions with stakeholders to gather ideas. Kudos to the minister.

What is clear to all is that education is an important investment for the nation.

It is through education that many escaped from poverty, especially those from rural areas.

It is through education that we have nurtured the talent to respond to economic and social challenges.

Many countries have improved their competitiveness through innovation.

In a world where innovation is now a criterion for competitiveness, the business playground



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has changed. And with the pressure of climate change, the demand for sustainability has also become more urgent.

We see evidence of this in the export of palm oil to European Union countries.

The economy is not the only agenda driving our investment in education.

Education has the goal of producing citizenry who can resolve the nation's social ills.

Unemployment and corruption, for instance, are rooted in

the failings in the economy.

Others, such as drug abuse, ethno-religious strife and crimes, can be attributed to poor social upbringing. Of course, misguided education would take a share of the blame.

As a small country that depends on external forces to support our economy, there is no doubt that we need to engage such forces.

Language proficiency is important. The more languages, the better.

But there are educationists who are against moves to equip our young with English language proficiency.

As if mastering a foreign language will be at the expense of our national language.

We need fresh ideas.

Hopefully, the new panel of advisers can propose them.

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