Maszlee reveals plan to merge Science and Arts streams

By SANDHYA MENON
educate@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Streamless schools are the way forward. Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik said this was among the suggestions received from the National Education Policy review committee.

“We are not going to put our students into Science and Arts (streams) anymore. In a new curriculum we will implement, we will not only emphasise Science, but also Arts (and culture) because knowledge is one; it cannot be compartmentalised and should be integrated instead,” he said yesterday at the “Open Dialogue on Malaysian Education with Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik: The way forward, he added, is to make STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) a way of life.

“STEM education will be updated to become STREAM, including the vital components of Arts and Reading. We will also shift the priorities of teachers and lecturers nationally to focus on teaching STEM in a fun and experiential way, thereby making STEM accessible to all,” he said.

Dr Maszlee also said arts would be continuously enhanced in schools and universities.

Organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli), the open dialogue session saw Dr Maszlee answering questions from the floor on various concerns regarding the education system.

Also present at the dialogue was Asli chairman Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah, who suggested that the government consider setting up a high-powered committee on education chaired by the prime minister of the day.

“I suggest that the committee include all relevant ministries and representatives from other key stakeholders. In effect, this would be a committee that oversees the knowledge sector from a holistic perspective,” he said.

Cheah, who is also Jeffrey Cheah Foundation founding trustee and Sunway University chancellor, said the committee would identify strategic objectives, specify and monitor implementation plans.

Emphasising the need to nurture qualities such as integrity, empathy, tolerance, leadership, teamwork and inclusiveness, Cheah further recommended the inclusion of sustainable development agenda in educational institutions’ curriculum.

Also present were Asli’s Centre for Public Policy Studies chairman Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam and Sunway Education Group and Sunway University senior executive director Elizabeth Lee.