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PRESS RELEASE

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Indonesia and Singapore Education Ministers Strengthen Future-Oriented Educational Collaboration

Singapore, July 25, 2026— Indonesian Minister of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), Abdul Mu'ti, met with Singaporean Minister for Education Desmond Lee in a bilateral meeting to strengthen educational collaboration between the two nations. The meeting took place on Wednesday, July 22, on the sidelines of the 14th ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASEM).

The bilateral talks resulted in several key agreements aimed at bolstering Indonesia–Singapore educational ties. Discussions covered integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into learning, updating the bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on education, and enhancing educational access for students.

During the meeting, Abdul Mu'ti highlighted the massive scale of Indonesia's educational system, which serves over 50 million students scattered across an archipelago—many living in remote areas. In line with the vision of Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, the government continues to promote flexible distance learning using digital technology to expand access and bridge regional educational disparities.

"We can use technology to expand internet access, and we can leverage tools like AI as part of our strategy to close the gap between students in Indonesian cities and those living in remote regions," Minister Mu'ti stated.

However, the Minister emphasized that AI adoption must be balanced with critical and reflective thinking skills. Illustrating his point, Mu'ti shared a personal anecdote about asking AI to generate presentation materials in Javanese—a request the tool admitted it could not fulfill. He noted that this experience highlighted AI's inherent limitations in understanding language, culture, and local context without human intervention.

"AI can help outline descriptions or build a narrative, but it falls short when it comes to reflective and critical thinking," he noted.

During the discussion, Singaporean Minister for Education Desmond Lee proposed updating the two countries' bilateral MoU on educational cooperation, which was last renewed in 2017. Lee noted that rapid developments in technology and AI, alongside evolving global challenges, require a more adaptive and forward-looking framework—especially as both nations approach the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2027.

"Much has changed since 2017. Given advancements in technology, AI, and our focus on global challenges, updating and tailoring this MoU to be future-oriented represents a strong opportunity for domestic growth and deeper Indonesia–Singapore collaboration," Desmond Lee said.

Minister Mu'ti welcomed the initiative to renew the MoU as a strategic step forward. He also welcomed



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potential partnerships with Temasek and Singaporean enterprises operating in Indonesia to support educational improvements. Priority focus areas include addressing learning loss and supporting students in regions near Singapore, such as Sumatra.

Additionally, both ministers discussed the future of the Indonesian School in Singapore (Sekolah Indonesia Singapura, or SIS), whose location lease expires in April 2027. Minister Mu'ti expressed hope for a mutual agreement to ensure uninterrupted education for Indonesian children in Singapore. The leaders also touched on professional development initiatives for Indonesian educators and migrant workers residing in Singapore.

The bilateral meeting concluded on a warm note, with both ministers exchanging appreciation for shared cultural elements—including the traditional angklung, Cirebon's Megamendung batik motif, Peranakan batik, and durian—symbolizing the close cultural ties that underpin the educational partnership between the two nations.

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