IT will be key tool in second round of reform in schools

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Information technology will be the driving force of education reform in Thailand, says Education Minister Jurin Laksanavisit.

IT was key to improving educational standards at schools in remote areas under a previous reform programme.

It has become an even more important tool in the current, second wave of education reform, Mr Jurin said.

The first phase dealt with all-round educational improvements, from organisational management and budgeting to infrastructure and manpower development.

Current reforms, which started this year, will build on the first phase and focus on increasing IT’s role throughout the education system.

Upgrading vocational and non-formal education systems will be key targets, the ministry said.

Mr Jurin, in his capacity as president of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (Seameo), highlighted the importance of IT during his keynote speech at the 13th Unesco-APEID (Asia and Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development) in Hangzhou, China on Nov 15.

He said eight education projects, which form part of the second round of reform, would adopt IT as tool in schools nationwide.

The eight projects include plans to increase the number of computers in schools from one for every 40 students to one for every 10, by 2012; installing hi-speed internet at schools nationwide; long-distance learning via satellite communication; the E-Free TV educational programme; and promoting IT at community learning centres.

Mr Jurin said the government has set aside about 38 billion baht from the Thai Khem Kaeng public investment programme to finance the eight projects from 2010-12.

About the author

Writer: Onnucha Hutasingh
Position: Writer