

## **Guan Eng: Blueprint must avoid mediocrity**

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**By Susan Loone**

Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng says the national education blueprint must emphasise performance instead of rewarding mediocrity to be really effective.

"The blueprint must go back to basics and address the sad trend of rewarding mediocrity instead of emphasising performance," he said after the official opening of Wilmar GBS Sdn Bhd, a global business services company, in Penang today.

lim guan eng interview 160813 03Lim said the blueprint must also be able to prepare Malaysians for the ever developing and fast changing global economic and financial sectors, where English is the medium of doing business.

He urged the federal government to allow selected English medium schools to prepare citizens for the global market.

"Our command of English is very worrying, its standard is deteriorating at an alarming rate," he said.

Lim said the blueprint must also address the imbalance in the intake of women and men in local universities.

He added that currently the entry of women in local higher institutions of learning is at 70 percent, far exceeding that of the opposite gender.

"Soon companies would only be hiring women. It is time to equalise the situation by emphasising performance so both genders can make it to higher education," he said.

Lim was responding to a question on the National Education Blueprint launched by Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin in Kuala Lumpur today.

The document is aimed at raising quality of the Malaysian education system and includes revamping the school curriculum by 2017, emphasis learning maths and science in Bahasa Malaysia and raising the standard of English as a second language.

Earlier, Lim lauded Wilmar's decision in choosing to set up its company in Penang,

which he described as a "favoured" BPO (business process outsourcing) location in recent years.

He said Penang is favoured due to its "talent pool, efficient supply chain, good infrastructure, clean and good governance, international benchmark and intelligent city".

Wilmar is one of the largest listed companies by market capitalisation on Singapore exchange and its entrance into the BPO industry in Penang has provided a "significant boost" to the sector that the state as committed to develop, he added.

Lim said to show its commitment, the state has set aside a portion of an 100-acre parcel of land in Bayan Lepas for a BPO hub.

"BPOs are service-oriented, value-added, talent-intensive and they perform billions of dollars worth of transactions each day," said Lim.

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