

Pro-PPSMI groups to form coalition
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PETALING JAYA, March 10 — Several parents' groups said today they will band together in a coalition to push Putrajaya into reinstating the teaching of science and mathematics in English (PPSMI).

Concerned Parents of Selangor (CPS) head Shamsudin Hami said the new umbrella group, Association of Parents Groups for Reforming Education (ASPIRE), will allow for easier exchange of views between the government and pro-PPSMI parents.

"We cannot address matters in bits and pieces... To make the job easier, we are forming a coalition of parents' groups," he told reporters at a PPSMI rally at Padang Timur here that was attended by some 150 parents.

Shamsudin speaks to the press on the formation of a coalition of parents' groups.
"With ASPIRE, there should be no more excuses. You don't need to go state by state and waste time, waste taxpayers' money. Just stick to ASPIRE, because ASPIRE consists of parents' groups from Penang to Johor and Sabah."

Also present were representatives from the Parent Action Group for Education (PAGE), Malacca Action Group of Parents in Education (MAGPIE), Herald of Penang Education (HOPE) and lawmakers Hannah Yeoh and Loh Gwo-Burne.

Shamsudin said ASPIRE will put together a "parents' charter" on education which will encompass all the issues which have to be addressed in order to transform the education system, he said.

This included the removal of "culturally-biased, so-called knowledge" present in the national education syllabus, which is needed if confidence in national schools is to be restored, he said.

He reiterated that PPSMI must be made an option in schools, the implementation of which should be left to parents and not headmasters or even the Education Ministry.

Shamsudin added he remained hopeful that the government will listen to the demands of parents who favour PPSMI, noting that Putrajaya had promised to abolish the Internal Security Act (ISA) after receiving heavy criticism from the public and civil rights groups.

"Apart from whatever is written in the holy books, I don't think that is chiselled in stone," he said.

"PPSMI is only a policy. What about the ISA? It's a law. It can be removed. So it's all up to the people and the government. It needs political will."

The government has come under fire from former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad

and pro-English lobby groups over its move in 2009 to revert to the teaching of science and mathematics in Bahasa Malaysia (MBMMBI).

Despite much criticism, Putrajaya has said it will not back down from the decision but would allow the final PPSMI batch to continue until they complete their secondary education.

MBMMBI, mooted in July 2009 as a replacement for PPSMI, came into effect in January last year for Year One students.

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