

Opposition MPs call for release of detailed reports on current education system
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By Lisa J. Ariffin

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 14 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) today urged Putrajaya to disclose detailed reports on the current education situation to encourage constructive criticisms and recommendations to its new education blueprint.

Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar and Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua were referring to UNESCO's April 2011 review of Malaysia's education system, the World Bank's report on the country's expenditure and two other reports on education by a local as well as international review panel.

Nurul Izzah and Pua believed access to detailed reports on weaknesses in the current education system would enable the public to make necessary and relevant recommendations on the new education masterplan, which will run from 2013 to 2025.

"Our biggest worry is on its (blueprint) credibility. The Education Ministry has not highlighted the weaknesses of current education system including a detailed report," Nurul Izzah told a press conference.

She said the ministry had instead "given glossy view of things".

"This is not sufficient to convince these are necessary steps to improve the quality of the system," she said, referring to the 11 "shifts" comprising the report.

The education masterplan comprises 11 "shifts" to inculcate six attributes in children: knowledge, thinking skills, leadership, bilingual proficiency, ethics and national identity.

The shifts include empowering state and district education departments and schools to customise solutions based on need and recruiting only the top 30 per cent of graduates for teacher training.

Pua said relevant documents were needed in order for the public to contribute constructively.

"We will submit our report in October. Without documents, the report won't be as comprehensive," he said, referring to PR's feedback report on the blueprint.

"We're not here to condemn but to make it better for future generation," he added.

The two opposition leaders also announced the formation of a Pakatan Rakyat Education Taskforce (PET), consisting of nine leaders across the coalition, to study and respond to Putrajaya's blueprint.

"Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said to de-politicise education. We hope our recommendations are also included in the blueprint and implemented to improve the education system," Pua said.

In the new masterplan launched on Tuesday, Malaysia aims to be in the top third of the Programme For International Student Assessment (PISA) test within the next 13 years. The country is currently ranked in the bottom third.

The education masterplan report is available for free from the Education Ministry website.

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