

**Literature text debate to hit Tenang**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**January 5, 2011**

Literature group Kumpulan Seniman Paksi Rakyat Malaysia (Paksi) will enter the Tenang district on the day of the by-election - Jan 30 - to defend the literature textbook Interlok, written by national laureate Abdullah Hussain.

This is Paksi's response to the threats made by the Federation of Malaysian Indian Organisations (Prima) to carry out a nationwide protests and disrupt the upcoming Tenang by-election.

Paksi president Che Shamsudin Othman, also known as Dinsman in the literature fraternity, said the main intention of the movement was to educate, express and protect the nature of the novel.

"We will run a forum in Tenang. It's not that we want to campaign but to defend and explain the nature of the textbook and the art of literature ... realiti yang cukup baik (a good example of reality)," he told reporters at a meeting of the Nasional Writers Association (Pena) in Kuala Lumpur today.

Interlok portrays the right image of 1Malaysia, Che Shamsudin said, adding that the textbook speaks of each of the three main races in the country.

In response to threats to burn copies of the Malay literature textbook made by another coalition of Indian NGOs yesterday, he said it was a political move and he could not do anything apart from expressing himself.

"The nature of literature is not seen as art in this case, but as a political stunt. Paksi cannot do anything if they want to burn the textbook," he said.

However, the details for the Paksi forum in Tenang, including the speakers, have not been finalised.

Meanwhile, literature web portal eSastera Malaysia president Wan Abu Bakar Wan Abas, who was also present, said he strongly believes in the teachers of the textbook and has high confidence that they would accurately deliver the content of Interlok to the students.

The issue first surfaced at the end of last year when Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department T Murugiah had registered his protest after his ministry discussed the novel with Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka.

The MIC also called for changes to be made to the novel before it is used as a literature textbook by Form Five students this year, with the BN component party saying it contained a chapter that was offensive to Indians.

