

**MIC wants 'pariah' dropped from Interlok**  
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The 'Interlok' issue on the word, 'pariah' should be "locked", said MIC president G Palanivel.

While it was not a political issue, it was nevertheless, a sensitive one to the Indian community in the country, he said, adding that the party was adamant in wanting the offensive word dropped from the novel.

'Interlok', written by national laureate Abdullah Hussein, is currently used as a literature textbook for Form Five, beginning this year.

Palanivel hoped the five-man panel shortlisted by the party to have discussions with the education ministry over the usage of the word in the novel, would be able to bring closure to the sensitive issue.

He was speaking to Bernama after attending the 1Malaysia Ponggal celebrations at the MIC headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today.

The MIC has selected Hindu Sangam president RS Mohan Shan, University Malaya's former head of Indian Studies Department Dr S. Singaravelu, the department's current head, Associate Professor Dr S Kumaran, MIC education bureau chairman Datuk Dr T. Marimuthu and former education ministry official G. Krishnabagwan to be in the panel.

**'Just a small issue'**

MIC vice-president SK Devamany hoped the issue, which he described as "just a small issue", should not be blown out of proportion and taken advantage of, by certain groups out to get political mileage.

However, the deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Department disagreed over the usage of the novel as a text book for Form Five students whom he felt were too young to understand the caste system as portrayed in the novel.

"We don't want this issue to create disharmony between teachers and students," he said.

Meanwhile, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department T Murugiah said the public complaints bureau under his supervision had received 27 complaints against the novel.

MIC Youth secretary C Sivarraajh said the movement, in cooperation with Koperasi Buku Malaysia Berhad, was planning to organise a debate on the subject at Rumah University, University Malaya on Jan 26.

Representatives from the party, teaching profession and the national writers association are expected to take part in the discussion.

- Bernama

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