

Build our school or lose Tenang, PM told
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Seven NGOs in Johor have urged Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to make good BN's promise to build an independent Chinese high school in Segamat or risk losing the Tenang by-election.

The NGOs have been campaigning for the revival of the Seg Hwa independent Chinese high school or the establishment of another new independent school in Segamat since the 1980s.

The original Seg Hwa independent Chinese high school in Segamat, a town 30 km North of Labis, had been converted to national secondary school after the introduction of Education Act 1961.

Spokesperson for the groups Nyam Kee Han (left) said that this was a "rational and appropriate" demand.

"We are of the view that national integration and development will only be achieved if the government recognise people's rights to accept mother tongue education and ensure multiculturalism in national education and cultural system," said Nyam.

In March 1986, 73 Chinese associations in Segamat began the campaign to revive the Seg Hwa independent Chinese high school before the general elections.

According to the chairperson of Segamat Kwang Sai Association Lai Hee Sang, the BN government then had given the green light before the polls but went against their promise right after the election.

"This had angered the people there and eventually BN lost the Jementah and Labis state seats (as it was called then), for the first time, in 1990 general election," said Lai.

"I hope the prime minister will take heed of the lesson in 1990."

'Prove 1Malaysia is real'

The group had submitted a memorandum on the matter to Najib during his visit to Labis two days ago.

"If the 1Malaysia is indeed true instead of a political slogan, our application should be approved," answered Lai when asked whether he is optimistic of a positive answer from the premier.

The seven NGOs comprise Segamat Kwang Sai Association, Federation of Johor Chinese Schools Alumni Associations, Friends of Suaram Johor, Jaringan Rakyat Tertindas (Jerit) Johor and Malaysia Youths and Students Democratic Movement (Dema).

The groups called for a press conference at the Segamat Tiong Hua Chinese association office today to release a list of demands to government ahead of the Jan 30 Tenang by-election.

Among others, the groups are demanding equal treatment to all Malaysians, the abolish of draconian laws such as the Education Act 1996 which aims to eliminate Chinese and Tamil education in the country and Internal Security Act, ensure government funding to all education institutes for minority groups, abolish racial quota system in all sectors, and recognise Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) used by independent Chinese high schools.

They also wanted government to restore the citizenship of the late Lim Lian Geok, a Chinese educationist and activist who was stripped of his Malayan citizenship and his teaching licence in 1961 due to his involvement in mother tongue education movement.

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