

**Muhyiddin lied, say Indian groups**  
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The Federation of Indian NGO Associations has tagged Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin a liar and a traitor for suggesting that the ministry has reached consensus with the Indian community on the use of the Malay literature textbook 'Interlok'.

Instead, the federation's information chief AP Raja Retinam said, some Indian representatives who attended Tuesday's meeting had called for a total withdrawal of the book.

"Muhyiddin is a liar and a traitor for saying the ministry has reached a consensus, with making some amendments, as well as adding a glossary and teaching guidelines, as possible solutions.

"We, along with the representatives who attended the meeting, had called for the complete withdrawal of the book, not such solutions," Raja Retinam (left) said, adding that those who mislead the public would go to hell.

The federation, which opposes the use of the Form Five textbook in schools, had also earlier said it would put up a candidate in Tenang, but did not do so.

Raja Retinam instead called on the Indian voters there to give their backing to PAS.

He has also called on the MIC, which sent its representatives to the meeting in Putrajaya last Tuesday, to hold a central working committee meeting to discuss Muhyiddin's statement and for the party to state its honest position.

Muhyiddin said yesterday the meeting, chaired by deputy minister Puad Zarkashi, had arrived at a consensus with possible solutions to end the 'Interlok' row, such as inserting additional footnotes, a glossary and teaching guidelines into the textbook.

Muhyiddin said the novel discussed national unity and integration among races, which were in line with the 1Malaysia concept.

The minister added that it was just that there were worries in the MIC and certain groups from the Indian community over a few words used in the novel.

**Mass police reports**

Raja Retinam called on the Indian community to join the move tomorrow to file police reports 'en masse' to put on record the Indian community's dissatisfaction with 'Interlok' and the ministry's insistence on using the book in schools.

"Go all out, in groups or as families, to every police station. Make sure everybody makes a report against 'Interlok'," he said.

Malaysiakini on Tuesday quoted a source who attended the Putrajaya meeting as telling the panel that 'pariah' and other words once used on low-caste people have been declared

unlawful in India.

Therefore, teaching Malaysian students aged 16 and 17 years such things now would not be suitable. It could rekindle what was no longer prevalent today, and even create more tension amongst students, the source said.

Some 120,000 copies of 'Interlok' have been distributed in Selangor, Putrajaya, the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Negri Sembilan, and there is worry about potential repercussions, the source said.

During Thaipusam at Batu Caves on Thursday, the Hindu Rights Action Force and members of the Human Rights Party protested against 'Interlok' just as Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak arrived at the venue, with the police making nine arrests.

### **Muhyiddin 'missing the point'**

Meanwhile, DAP national vice-chairperson M Kulasegaran said in a statement his party would continue to pursue the 'Interlok' issue throughout the Tenang by-election and after, until the matter was resolved to the satisfaction of the Indian community.

"No one should be surprised if this issue prolongs even into the (next) general elections. It will snowball to become the central issue of anger of the Indian community against BN," said the Ipoh Barat parliamentarian.

Further, Kulasegaran (left) said, Muhyiddin had missed the point if he thought grievances over the matter could be resolved by him saying that a consensus had been reached, and that the author had no intention of disparaging the Indian community.

"Such clarification or argument misses the real point, for no one is questioning the intentions of the author," he said.

"One would think that the meeting would have reached a consensus that the book has hurt the Indian community and that the controversy must be immediately resolved.

"The controversy has dragged on long enough and the federal government should focus on the real questions," Kulasegaran added.

Among them, he said, were:

- \* Can such a controversial book be used as a school textbook?
- \* Can it truly promote better racial understanding and forge unity?
- \* Why can't we just have a textbook that is non-controversial and acceptable to all?
- \* Why is it so difficult for the education ministry to right an obvious wrong?

Those who argued that the book must be read "in the right context or as a whole" do not understand why the Indian community is angry with and hurt by inaccuracies and demeaning words found in the book, Kulasegaran said.

"It is disappointing that the federal government cannot even understand the sentiments of the Indian community.

"If the cabinet leaders do understand... then they definitely lack the political will and wisdom to resolve the issue." he added.

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