

Gauntlet thrown at DPM over Interlok issue
Malaysiakini.com
April 22, 2011

Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yasin has been taken to task for allegedly misleading the public where the current status of the Interlok novel as a compulsory textbook for form five students is concerned.

The charge was levelled by the chair of the National Interlok Action Team (NIAT), Thasleem Mohammed Ibrahim, at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He pointed out that Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, had said on Jan 28 that the student edition of the novel would only be used after the amendments had been done (as reported in Sinar).

But on March 23 he had told parliament that the cabinet had sanctioned the continued use of the book in schools as reported in the Hansard.

Muhyiddin challenged

"Muhyiddin Yassin was not telling the truth. We want the truth. NIAT NONE challenges him to repeat outside what he had said in parliament, so that we will be able to take the necessary action to find out the truth, including taking him to court," Thasleem (right) said.

It is interesting to note that only Muhyiddin had been touching on the subject, and no other minister or party leaders had said anything about it so far, he pointed out.

"What about the MIC, Gerakan, MCA, PPP or PKR, DAP? We have heard nothing from them. But we do hear a lot from the people, not only from the Indians but the Chinese and others as well, who clearly say 'NO' to Interlok," he claimed.

Thasleem took pains to explain the steps that his organisation had taken since January to communicate with the government, all to no avail.

"We had, in a professional manner, raised the matter in our letters to the ministers, heads of departments and all the others who in one way or other had a role to play in this issue.

It is shocking to realise that those very people who talk about a 'caring and responsive' government and government service had not bothered to respond to our case as stated in our letters backed with well-researched information.

"Even the Muftis of Selangor, Negri Sembilan and the Federal Territory have been conspicuously silent on this matter," said Thasleem.

'Shocking things to talk about'

NIAT had met Pakatan MPs and the youth wing of PAS to brief them on the real issue in this controversy. But BN backbenchers had been giving excuses, as did the MIC.

"It was MIC president G Palanivel who on Jan 23 asked the government to withdraw the novel. Then, they talked about the 'P' word and amendments. Now, they are silent.

"NIAT asked the prime minister for just 15 minutes to place its case before him. NIAT was informed that he had no free time till June. But it is plain for all to see that he had been having plenty of time for social gatherings.

A Rajaretnam, a NIAT council member, interjected: "The PM had three hours on end for Bollywood-style entertainment at the Mines.

"We have again written to the PM for an appointment," Thasleem added.

He made one point clear that as long as there is no reply from the DPM and others to their letters, "I will steadfastly hold that I am right in stating that the Interlok novel is contrary to the teachings of Islam."

He also issued a warning: "If no proper answer is forthcoming, we have shocking things to talk about in the next few weeks."

Muhyiddin gets one-week deadline

Thasleem took Muhyiddin to task for saying that the issue had become a threat to national security.

"What we have been engaged in is the democratic process of telling the government that what it had done was wrong. How could that become a threat to national security? he asked.

"If, as claimed by Muhyiddin, it had become a threat to national security, who is the cause of it; it is Muhyiddin Yassin himself."

He also that Muhyiddin "has one week from today' to accept his challenge to him to repeat outside parliament what he had said there.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.

Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/162156>