

Muhyiddin to meet Chinese schoolteachers ahead of GE

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By Abdul Rahim Sabri

The heightened fervour in Johor in the coming general election is increasingly evident as caretaker Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin is set to hold a "special meeting" next week with teachers of national-type Chinese schools.

Muhyiddin (right in photo), who is also caretaker education minister, is said to be looking at rousing the support of Chinese schoolteachers for BN by holding the April 16 meeting - just four days before nomination day - at SJKC Foon Yew in Johor Bahru.

The BN government is facing a Pakatan Rakyat onslaught in the southern state led by DAP heavyweight Lim Kit Siang, state PKR chief Chua Jui Meng and PAS vice-president Salahuddin Ayub.

Lim is leaving his Ipoh Timor parliamentary seat to contest BN-held Gelang Patah in southern Johor, while Chua is reportedly set to contest in Segamat, another BN-held seat in the northernmost part of the state.

The meeting will include teachers from outside of Johor.

An officer with the Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory Education Department confirmed that headmasters and teachers from 15 schools have been instructed to attend the meeting. Buses will be provided to ferry the teachers to Johor.

In the letter, the department expressed hope that the Chinese schools will "accord their cooperation and attention to help realise the country's education objectives".

A teacher in Johor also confirmed with Malaysiakini that his school had received a similarly-written instruction last Tuesday.

"I heard allocations will be given to certain schools during the event. All teachers will also receive goody bags," claimed the teacher, who declined to be named.

"But this is a waste of time - forcing us to leave behind our work and students just to entertain the politicians. Holding such an event at this time, we all know what is he (Muhyiddin) up to," he added.

Wee: Nothing to do with GE

Contacted by Malaysiakini, caretaker Deputy Education Minister Wee Ka Siong confirmed the meeting, but denied it is linked to the coming general election.

Instead, he said Muhyiddin has held many similar sessions with teachers during his

nationwide visits.

"The programme has been planned for a long time... We have always planned to hold it in March or April."

He also said special allocations will be distributed to the schools during the function, adding that the funds are part of the RM100 million special building, upgrade and maintenance fund for Chinese schools, approved by Parliament last year.

When asked how many schools will receive the allocations, Wee said he did not have the information at hand.

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