

Khairy defends PM for not taking Utusan to task

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By Nigel Aw

Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin today defended Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's refusal to rein in Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia for its 'What more do the Chinese want?' front page report.

He added that the premier's "Chinese Tsunami" remark on the general election results, which led to the article, was only an observation and he was not faulting any ethnic group.

"As far as the prime minister is concerned, he stated a fact that there was a discernible swing among the Chinese voters against BN.

"He was making an observation and was not faulting any community... (Utusan's) headline and the prime minister's position are completely different," Khairy said during the 7th Annual Malaysian Student Leaders Summit.

He was responding to a student's question on why Najib failed to take Utusan Malaysia to task over the inflammatory headline.

"The prime minister is committed to the 1Malaysia approach until today. He could have gone back after the election and say look, we did not get the Chinese support so let's forget about 1Malaysia and focus on people who supported us.

"But he has been consistent that we must stick to an inclusive policy platform," he said.

Khairy reiterated that Utusan's headline was wrong but it was not endorsed by the government.

"Who are you as politicians to get angry at people for not voting for you, it's crazy," he said.

Khairy said after the government received two "black eyes" from the 2008 and 2013 general election, BN is more aware than ever that it needed to change.

'Single-stream school difficult'

He was also asked by a Chinese school educated student if race-based and

religion-based schools ought to be abolished.

NONEKhairy (right) admitted that it was political suicide for politicians to address this issue.

He lamented that oftentimes, the different races live different lives and seldom interacted with each other.

"One way to look at this is to have a single-stream school system but the Chinese and Indians will get angry because vernacular schools will have to become national schools.

"And then there are also MRSM (Mara Junior Science Colleges) and religious schools that will also be affected and people will say cannot (abolish)," he said.

As such, Khairy said he too was at a loss in finding a solution.

He proposed that one way was for the different schools to conduct co-curricular activities together which would be more effective than national service.

"The funding for such joint school activities is only RM2.5 million but national service gets RM600 million.

"How can national service solve 12 or 15 years of isolation (among races)?" he said.

Khairy was standing in for Najib at the student summit as the premier was unable to make it.