

'Didn't Muhyiddin promise to defend vernacular schools?' - Muda leader

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Bersatu Youth should stand up to the party's own president Muhyiddin Yassin, instead of picking on a DAP lawmaker if it is truly insistent on abolishing vernacular schools, Muda's pro-tem information chief Zaidel Baharuddin said.

He said this in response to Bersatu Youth information chief Mohd Ashraf Mustaqim Badrul Munir, who reiterated the Bersatu wing's position to abolish vernacular schools.

Zaidel pointed out that Muhyiddin (above), as the education minister under the BN government in 2013, had pledged that "while the sun and moon still existed, vernacular schools will remain".

Zaidel said if Ashraf Mustaqim only dared to chastise DAP's Bukit Mertajam MP Steven Sim but cowed in the face of his own party president, then he was nothing more than an apple polisher and cannot call himself a nationalist.

Yesterday, Sim had questioned Deputy National Unity Minister Wan Ahmad Fayshal Wan Ahmad Kamal in the Dewan Rakyat if he still stood by his previous position to abolish vernacular schools.

This prompted Wan Fayshal to stress that he had only sought for the Malay language to be strengthened in vernacular schools, maintaining that he was only speaking in his capacity as the Bersatu Youth chief.

Why the word 'national' is in the name of the schools

Zaidel noted that Ashraf Mustaqim, in his criticism of vernacular schools, had accused them of having a syllabus that deviates from the national history.

"Allow me to remind Ashraf Mustaqim that the curriculum and subjects of SJK (National-type School) schools are set by the Education Ministry. That is why the word 'national' is in their name.

"If they have deviated, then the deviation comes from the Education Ministry which is headed by Bersatu," he said. Bersatu's Mohd Radzi Md Jidin is the education minister.

Ashraf Mustaqim had accused vernacular schools of being a stumbling block to

national integration, insisting that students should still pick up multiple languages but this should be done under a single national system.

Zaidel acknowledged that the command of the national language remains a problem but said Ashraf Musrqaim should not only pick on vernacular schools.

"Mention also the elites who send their children to English (international) schools and feel awkward when speaking the national language," he said.

Zaidel said reviewing the national education system requires a holistic view and should not be done selectively for political purposes.

"Should every Malaysian be able to speak the national language? Surely. Should we find ways to unite Malaysians of different races? I support that.

"But if we are truly to talk about unity and the identity of Bangsa Malaysia, then discuss this with wisdom and justice," he said.

Zaidel added that if Bersatu truly cared about the national education system, it could start with the immediate pressing matters such as ensuring sufficient laptops for online learning and for their multi-billion ringgit IT system, which has received plenty of complaints from teachers, to be audited and put in a clearer

direction in a post-pandemic world.

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