

Minister urges end to student politics ban
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The de facto law minister today urged the government to remove a contentious ban preventing students from taking part in politics.

Malaysian students are prevented by a 1971 law from involvement in political parties and trade unions - a rule labelled by critics as a violation of human rights and an impediment to freedom of expression.

NONEMohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz, minister in the prime minister's office in charge of law, told AFP that the law was outdated and that students must be given the space to develop their minds and ideas.

"If they are of voting age, why can't they go out to campaign and support whichever party they choose? The present situation is ridiculous," he said.

"I agree that they should not be politicking on campus... but this does not mean they cannot get involved in politics once off campus," he added. "We really need to change the law."

Cabinet rejects lifting ban

Nazri, an outspoken member of premier Najib Razak's government, said the cabinet needed to rethink the law but could not say when this would happen.

The cabinet in August refused to drop the controversial ban, saying students are allowed to be involved in political parties if they obtain permission from their vice-chancellors.

Student activists say such permission is rarely given and have called for the law to be reformed.

Members of the country's ruling Umno have also criticised the ban.

- AFP

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