

MCA leader slams Dr Mahathir over apartheid remark

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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad's accusation that Chinese educationist movement Dong Jiao Zong (DJZ) practised apartheid by rejecting the Vision Schools idea did not go down well with Deputy Education Minister Dr Wee Ka Siong.

Speaking to reporters at the Parliament lobby today, the MCA Youth chief slammed Mahathir for making baseless and inaccurate allegations.

'Vision School' introduced during Mahathir's tenure was aimed at integrating students of various cultural backgrounds from national schools and vernacular schools in one compound. However, it hit a snag following DJZ's disapproval of the concept.

Various Chinese and Indian ethnic movements also objected to it as they believed the system would restrict the use of their respective mother tongue in schools.

Mahathir, who addressed a gathering of some 1,000 people in a summit organised by Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia (Perkasa) yesterday, said that the Malays were 'unfairly' labelled as racists and their kindness abused by other Malaysians.

"It is not an accurate opinion... the Chinese committees' apprehension must also taken into consideration," said Wee.

"His statement is that the Chinese community does not like to associate with the Malay community, I should inform him that almost 90 percent of students who complete their primary education at Chinese vernacular schools enrol into national-type secondary schools," he added.

Vision school is not the only way

Wee said the implementation of Vision Schools was not the only way to foster unity and integration between the races.

"There are programmes under the Education Ministry intended for the same purpose... the children at Chinese schools also sing the same national anthem and recite the same Rukun Negara," he said, adding that racial integration should be evaluated from primary to tertiary level.

Met later, MCA president Ong Tee Keat also criticised Mahathir over his remarks. "They (Chinese educationists) do not agree with the Vision Schools, that's all," he said.

"If we really understand the thinking of the Chinese community and educationists (we would understand that) they also accepted the programme to strengthen integration among the different races which was introduced in the 1980s.

"When the student integration programme was established by the Education Ministry a few years ago, the Chinese community also accepted it," he said.

Umno must promote Malay rights

In a related development, Perkasa president Ibrahim Ali, who held a press conference in Parliament, said Umno must take a stronger position in defending the rights and privileges of the Malays as enshrined in

the social contract.

The Pasir Mas independent MP added that Perkasa would be submitting their 10-point resolution, asserting the rights and privileges of the Malays, to the Agong and incoming premier Najib Abdul Razak soon.

The resolution endorsed by 66 Malay non-governmental groups incorporates the special positions of Malay rulers, the national language and Islam as the official religion of the federation.

"Perkasa would act as the watchdog and we are going to fight for our rights... we not asking anything more than what was endowed to us," said Ibrahim.

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