

'Chinese don't mix with others': Dr M under fire
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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad has come under fire over his accusation that Chinese parents do not want their children to mix with other races.

Mahathir had said this when asked to comment on the proposal to implement a single stream education system, which the 84-year-old politician backed.

Taking him to task was DAP deputy secretary-general Chong Eng, who said the former premier's statement was "totally inaccurate and amounts to an incitement towards racial prejudices."

"The majority of students from Chinese primary schools will graduate to government supported secondary schools and there are about 70,000 non Chinese students in these schools.

"The Chinese Malaysians have the right to preserve this unique system of learning, established in this country over the last 200 years," she added.

Instead of harping on the issue of mainstream versus vernacular schools, the Bukit Mertajam MP said Umno and Barisan Nasional should go to the root causes of racial disintegration.

Chong Eng said Mahathir's remark that following the example in other countries such as US, Canada and Australia, Malaysia should also have a single-stream school is going back to square one of this issue.

"Mahathir also blamed the Chinese educationists for the failure of his vision school project.

"This is not the first time Mahathir or other Umno-BN leaders tried to put the blame of the country's racial problems on vernacular education," she said.

"In fact in December last year, Mahathir's son and currently deputy minister Mukhriz had called for the abolishment of vernacular education," she added.

'Short-sighted and outright racist'

The opposition leader also noted that Mahathir's criticism of the vernacular education failed to take into account Malaysia's socio-historical and cultural background.

"Chinese education had been established in our country since the 19th century and was allowed to flourish until today.

"Instead of finding fault with vernacular education and following the footsteps of other countries, Malaysia should be proud that we have a unique multi-stream education system," she said.

In view of the rise of China as the soon to be world's largest economy, Chong Eng said Umno and BN should work on strategies to attract foreign students to Malaysia to learn the Chinese language and develop Malaysia into a regional educational hub.

"Umno-BN is not only short-sighted and ignorant but outright racist when all they can do is keep throwing blind accusations on the Chinese and other vernacular education to gain political brownie points.

"There are many other issues to be looked into in terms of national integration, including the problem of categorising Malaysians as bumiputera and non-bumiputera," she said.

"The ruling party should deal with this first and check their facts before depriving the Chinese community of their constitutional rights for the education of their choice," she added.

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