

Ka Siong: I forgive my attackers
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, March 26 — Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong today forgave those who heckled and nearly assaulted him during the rally by Chinese educationists yesterday.

The deputy education minister appeared miffed when approached by reporters today on his next course of action, saying he refuses to politicise the issue further.

File photo of Wee (centre, in white shirt) being led away from the rally on March 25, 2012.
— Picture by Choo Choy May

“Do what they like. I’ve chosen to forgive them.

“I’m prepared for the worst. I’ve the guts to listen to them, that’s all,” he said, when asked if he would lodge a police report over the incident.

“If I wanted to politicise it, I could have had another round of police reports and press conferences.

“I don’t even want to talk about it,” he said.

Wee pointed out that the alleged attempt by a rally participant to punch him had failed and he had not been hurt in the incident.

He said if the incident had caused him any injury, he would have lodged a report.

In a separate press conference at Parliament earlier, DAP MP Tan Kok Wai had categorically denied that the alleged attempt to hit Wee was by a Pakatan Rakyat (PR) member or supporter.

The Cheras MP said Wee should lodge a report into the incident if he chooses to blame the federal opposition for the incident.

Wee was chased out of the rally organised by the United Chinese School Committees Association (Dong Zong) yesterday to protest a lack of Chinese school teachers.

After the 5,000-strong rally ended, an angry swarm of people chanted for him to resign and it was alleged someone attempted to punch him before being prevented by a large security detail.

“I can’t say I felt threatened but it was a rude shock to me,” Wee told a press at a nearby hotel later.

“Suddenly people come and point at you and want to punch you. I am saddened. We are not hooligans. We are a civilised society.”

The deputy minister from the MCA suggested that the crowd was instigated by unidentified parties.

"I am saddened by manipulation by certain quarters," he said.

Wee said it was all right for people to express their dissatisfaction in a democratic society but it should be "based on facts".

Wee acknowledged that the teacher shortage was a problem, saying that the government was giving it immediate attention.

Although Wee announced on Wednesday eight long- and short-term plans by the Education Ministry to resolve the issue, Dong Zong said the next day the government has not kept its promises in the past and "this hasty announcement is an attempt to offset the 325 rally."

In supporting the rally at Dong Zong's headquarters here, United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaysia (Jiao Zong) president Ong Kow Yee had also said on Thursday they wrote numerous times to the government but the matter remains unresolved.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had also announced on Thursday more Mandarin-speaking teachers would be trained to solve the shortage.

He said the government was committed to resolving the problem and had appointed Wee to speak to Chinese educationist groups to come up with a solution.

It was also reported that the Education Ministry had placed 1,482 temporary teachers in Chinese schools nationwide since January to address the shortage.

Wee had said there were only 392 vacancies left and headmasters needed to appoint temporary teachers according to their requirements.

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