

In schools, politics rears a sinister 'comic' appearance
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 13 — Copies of a political comic book extolling the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) government have been circulating among teachers in recent weeks ahead of the 13th general elections, purportedly distributed by state education departments.

The 50-page booklet in full colour featuring caricatures of figures resembling leading national political figures appear to paint those from the ruling coalition in the best positive light.

A comic depicts a character resembling an opposition leader with his arms around two men. In contrast, opposition political figures are painted in a downright negative and sometimes sinister manner, such as on page 31 of the booklet, which show a goateed man in glasses dressed in a singlet cuddling two half-naked men that appear to be linked to Najib's rival, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The PKR advisor who was accused of sodomising former male aide Mohd Saiful Bukari Azlan was, however, acquitted by the High Court earlier this year after a marathon three-year trial.

"The Education Ministry can call for meetings with us anytime. This time, we were briefed about the government's achievements in the past few years," a senior teacher from a national school told The Malaysian Insider.

The teacher, who spoke on condition of anonymity, had attended a recent briefing titled "Wacana Transformasi Minda" held by a state education department for school heads and their senior assistants.

"We were told that its a good government but there was no directive to vote for anyone.

"But each of us got this book, which speaks for itself," added the senior teacher.

The BN's mandate to rule expires in the first quarter of next year and speculation has been rife that national polls will be called early as in previous years, sometime in the next few months.

And teachers who form a large population of the civil workforce, are among the most significant target for support for BN.

A comic depicts a character resembling Najib in superhero guise. Not all schools have received the comic book though. Some senior teachers contacted by The Malaysian Insider claimed ignorance of the matter.

The education ministry has yet to respond to The Malaysian Insider's requests to clarify the allegation.

The comic book is purportedly published by Mj Publication Sdn Bhd, with its address listed at No 12/9, Jalan Jati 2, Persiaran Barat, 68000 Ampang, Selangor.

However, a search in the Yellow Pages business directory failed to turn up the alleged publisher's contact details. Further checks on Google Maps also seem to show that the address does not exist, casting doubt on the validity of the publisher.

The book also does not carry the printer's permit licence, which is a requirement of the Home Ministry.

The Malaysian Insider managed to obtain a copy of the comic book, which depict a caricature of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak against the national flag and a quartet that appear to represent Malaysia's diverse ethnic groups with the words, "I wouldn't break your trust" on the front cover.

Within the pages are a variety of graphic illustrations that praise the BN's leadership and policies, such as how the Najib administration has helped provide incentives to youths for more jobs under the 1 Malaysia policy.

An illustration on page 38 of the booklet also portrays Najib decked out in superhero kit and flying above a crowd with speech bubbles proclaiming "Hi! Superman".

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