

Anwar refused to resolve Chinese school issue in 1987, says Soi Lek
The Malaysian Insider
April 3, 2012
By Yow Hong Chieh

KUALA LUMPUR, April 3 — Chinese voters should not trust Pakatan Rakyat (PR) to resolve the Chinese school issue as the pact's leader refused to fix the problem when he was education minister, Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek said today.

The MCA president said that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had refused to budge on the government's appointment of non-Mandarin educated principals and senior assistants to vernacular schools in 1987, despite strident protests from Chinese educationists.

By doing so, Anwar, who now leads the opposition, caused Operasi Lalang that same year, he added.

"You must remember that in 1987, Ops Lalang was because of Anwar," he told reporters at Wisma MCA here after a party presidential council meeting.

"He refused to do anything... So if the Chinese have so much confidence in Anwar, then we should have second thoughts."

Operasi Lalang saw the arrest of 106 opposition leaders, Umno politicians and Chinese educationists under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

The crackdown — which the government has described as necessary to head-off growing racial tension between the Malays and the Chinese — also saw the printing permits for four papers revoked.

Dr Chua also pointed out that during his time as opposition leader, Anwar "has not said a word" about Chinese education, and claimed the opposition has hijacked the issue for political mileage.

He charged that Chinese education has not been given prominence in PR's Buku Jingga manifesto, with the exception of some "motherhood statements".

The Chinese should not be hoodwinked into saying the Chinese education issue is because of MCA. — Chua Soi Lek

The former health minister also hit out at rival party DAP for "hijacking" a rally held on March 25 to protest the shortage of qualified Chinese school teachers in the national education system.

DAP was using the issue to create "hate politics", he said, which ultimately led to the alleged assault of deputy education minister and MCA Youth chief Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong by a protester at the rally.

"We condemn the violence and abuse directed at Wee Ka Siong. You may not like it but Wee Ka Siong was selected by the government to head the panel to resolve this issue.

"The Chinese should not be hoodwinked into saying the Chinese education issue is because of MCA," he said.

Dr Chua added that while education is a federal issue, state governments could still extend their help to Chinese schools by giving land and subsidies for temporary teachers as well as electricity.

He also questioned why opposition-led states have not done more in this regard.

"Why have none of them done that? They only give RM5 million, RM3 million and talk around the whole world," he said.

"MCA has given more than the Penang government... but we didn't shout about it because we feel it is our responsibility to do so," he said.

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