

Muhyiddin accuses Dong Zong of 'big lies'
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By Shannon Teoh

SHAH ALAM, April 12 — Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin accused Chinese educationists today of telling “big lies” for claiming the government had sidelined Chinese vernacular schools for decades.

The deputy prime minister told over 500 vernacular school teachers from Selangor that the government has spent equally on all national schools, regardless of whether the medium of instruction was Malay, Mandarin or Tamil.

“Dong Zong held a big rally where they threw things at my deputy minister. So uncivilised,” he said referring to claims Datuk Wee Ka Siong was assaulted at the March 25 event.

“They said we have ignored their problems for decades. This is a big lie,” he said to the crowd made up of mostly Chinese teachers.

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, said that all national schools had problems, and not just Chinese schools, before citing a shortage of teachers who were proficient in English.

He also said the government spent an average of RM2.24 million per Chinese school, RM1.99 million per Tamil school and RM2.26 million on national schools teaching in Malay.

“The difference is very small. We have never sidelined schools just because they teach in Mandarin or Tamil,” he said during his hour-long speech on the emotive issue for the Chinese community.

During its March 25 rally, the United Chinese School Committees Association (Dong Zong) accused the government of compromising Chinese education by “deliberately” not training enough Chinese school teachers, resulting in a shortage that has lasted for up to 40 years.

Dong Zong president Yap Sin Tian told a crowd of over 5,000, who had chanted for Wee to resign, this was so the government could send in those without SPM Mandarin qualifications to fill the gap.

Wee, who was chased out and claimed he was assaulted after the rally, responded by saying he was willing to quit as deputy education minister if this could resolve the teacher shortage in Chinese primary schools.

He has also insisted the teacher shortage in Chinese primary schools has declined since he became deputy education minister in 2009.

The MCA Youth chief told Parliament early this month that when he joined the Education Ministry in 2009, there was a shortage of 4,991 teachers in Chinese schools that has been reduced each year to 1,870 this year.

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