

**Pakatan to fight 'seditious' calls to abolish vernacular schools, says DAP**  
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**By Ida Lim**

KUALA LUMPUR, May 14 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) will protect vernacular schools from being abolished after suggestions were made that their continued existence had affected national unity and contributed to Chinese voters overwhelmingly backing the opposition, the DAP said today.

The PR party's secretary-general Lim Guan Eng was referring today to a recent call by Tan Sri Abdul Rahman Arshad to abolish the schools where Mandarin and Tamil are the main languages of instruction.

Lim (picture) said the Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) pro-chancellor's remark amounted to sedition.

"Abdul Rahman's call for the abolition of Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools in favour of a single stream school is seditious and a BN MP, Mark Koding, was even convicted of sedition in 1982 for making the very same suggestion in Parliament in 1978," Lim said in a statement.

He said the Federal Constitution protects vernacular schools and education in the mother tongue, citing Article 152 (1) (a) and (b) of the country's supreme law.

"For this reason, PR and DAP are ready to fight legally in courts and seek support from all Malaysians — Malay, Chinese, Indian, Iban and Kadazan — to protect Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools from being abolished by Umno supporters like Tan Sri Abdul Rahman Arshad," the Bagan MP said.

Last Sunday, Abdul Rahman had reportedly said that vernacular schools presented a barrier to unity within the country, saying that the 13th general election showed that there was no unity in Malaysia and there was greater racism now.

He noted that the different ethnic groups did not mix around enough as most of the Chinese and Indian communities attend vernacular schools, while few of them are sent to national schools.

"It would be best that we have a single stream using Malay language in order to improve unity," he was quoted as saying by Malaysiakini at a forum titled "GE13 post-mortem: Muslim leadership and survival."

Abdul Rahman listed Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines as neighbouring countries that had adopted the use of a single language in their education policy in the push for unity, the news portal said.

But he reportedly said that students could still learn other languages in schools.

Vernacular Chinese and Tamil schools only exist at primary level and are part of the national education system.

While Mandarin and Tamil are respectively used as the medium of instruction, the syllabus

used is that of the national education system and is identical to that of national schools using Bahasa Malaysia.

There are no Chinese or Tamil schools at secondary level.

But there are 60 private institutions known as Chinese independent schools, where Mandarin and English are used as a medium of instruction. These schools are not recognised by the government.

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