

MP: End racial divisions
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Bede Hong

An opposition parliamentarian told the Dewan Rakyat today that a divisive line still runs between the major races in the country and called for the abandonment of race-based policies.

This was greeted by jeers from her Barisan Nasional (BN) counterparts.

Fong Po Kuan (DAP-Batu Gajah) said the government's Islam Hadhari or civilisational Islam concept was not functioning. To illustrate her point, she cited cases of wastage in government expenditure.

"Why are we still divided into bumiputeras and non-bumiputeras?" she asked when debating the motion of thanks on the royal address.

"Although our ancestors came here hundreds of years ago, we are still categorised differently from bumiputeras," she said.

She said students are given different examinations despite coming from the same school.

"The non-bumiputeras have to take the STPM (examination) while bumiputeras are able to take matriculation. This (divisiveness) has gone into education," she added.

Fong noted that although race-based policies were meant to eradicate poverty, this has threatened national unity.

She said government projects were only tendered to bumiputera contractors.

"These are just a few examples ... The colonialists practiced a policy of divide and rule ... how different really are the policies today? We are all anak (children of) Malaysia. We can march forward together, but the government must stop race-based politics.

"There is just too much politics nowadays. Everything is being politicised to the point where it has slowed progress," she added.

Handphones and nasi bungkus

Fong then proceeded to criticise BN MPs for 'wasting' taxpayers' money.

"Parliamentary briefings by ministries are now conducted in five star hotels, where each table is charged RM1,000. They (the MPs) get mobile phones," she said, drawing jeers.

"Why is this waste going on? It's not that we are jealous. We (the opposition) don't mind if we eat nasi bungkus.

"This is a waste of money. We can hold the briefings in Parliament. Where is Islam Hadhari?" she added.

She also criticised the giving out of gold jalur gemilang pins to BN Mps.

"This is an example of wastage. The money could have been spent on schools in Sarawak ... or in Kinabatangan (Sabah) where there is no electricity," she pointed out.

Fong also lamented that non-bumiputeras are perceived to be constantly questioning the status of Islam in this country.

"I have the utmost respect for Islam. It's status is protected by the Federal Constitution. My argument is to practice the slogans that you preach," she added.

Later, Mohamad Aziz (Sri Gading - BN) attacked the opposition MP.

"Why does DAP always waste time raising such trivial matters. Can't they see that the government has done much for the people," he said.

"Let DAP mull over their complaints if they can form a government," he added.

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