

Muhyiddin: Ignore other races at your own peril

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No political party can win an election in Malaysia without considering the interests of those outside its traditional support base, Umno deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin said.

“Political parties that question the special position of the Malays and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak will do so for their own perils. They will of course lose the majority support of the electorates.

“Likewise, political parties that undermine the legitimate interests of the other races will risk losing significant percentage of votes in elections and will fail to form national government.

“In the end, most political parties become more compliant to the constitutional framework that seeks to balance racial interests, and in so doing promote racial harmony, political stability and national unity,” he said in a speech in Sarajevo on Monday.

Muhyiddin’s remarks come as Umno president Najib Abdul Razak (picture) cops criticism for backing the racial sentiments at the Himpunan Rakyat Bersatu rally last week.

Defending the rally, he said Malays have been “slapped” too many times by those from other communities.

Najib was referring to the Bersih 4 rally where a predominantly Chinese crowd called for his resignation amid corruption investigations involving him.

Unfinished business

At his speech at the International Peace Conference, Muhyiddin said maintaining racial harmony in Malaysia is not easy with inter-ethnic suspicions running all the way to the pre-Independence era.

However, he said, Malaysia’s leaders have managed to foster trust between societies albeit with limitations.

Political leaders have an added challenge of championing of their own ethnic groups, while at the same time maintain cooperation in a multi-ethnic political coalition, he said.

This power-sharing concept has led to stability as coalitions are then forced to respect the legitimate interests of all races, he said.

He said the federal constitution also acts as a basis for inter-ethnic relations in Malaysia, but concedes that it is "an unfinished business as far as national unity and nation building is concerned".

"Don't worry about it because nation building everywhere in the world is an unfinished business. It has been and will always be work in progress.

"But for leaders, it is most important for us to ensure that nation building is progressively unfolding and that it does not stall," he said.

Najib's remarks on Himpunan Rakyat Bersatu led to a MCA Youth division to sever ties with the PM, prompting others to call for MCA's ouster from BN.

MCA said it will not take action against the Youth division.

BN failed to reach a consensus on the rally, with Umno backing it while non-Malay base parties rejecting it.

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