

Membership criteria not crucial, Muhyiddin tells critics

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The most important thing about Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu) is not its criteria for membership, but what it stands for, said its pro-tem president Muhyiddin Yassin.

Neither he or the party was racist, he emphasised, after attending a blood donation drive at a shopping mall in Kuala Lumpur today.

The party has come under fire from some quarters as the non-bumiputera was accepted only as associate members.

"Look at the constitution. I think most importantly, it's not about membership, but what the party stands for," he said.

The party's constitution spells out what Malaysians in general are concerned about, added the former deputy prime minister.

"It is not just the policies of the party. The constitution touches on issues of economy, education, religion, rights for Malaysians, good governance, anti-corruption and abuse of power.

"I think what Malaysians expect with any political party, we have spelt out very clearly in the constitution.

"It doesn't matter that I'm Malay, I am not a racist, I fight for Malaysians," he said, adding that Bersatu will be better than many other parties.

"The issue of racism does not arise at all. Stop," he said.

On the issue that non-Malays can only join the party as associate members, he said that many Malaysians do not want to be actively involved in politics, but just want to be part of it.

"We provide avenue for people like you who are non-Malays to be part of it. It means a lot in term of even inviting you to be ...even in the supreme council of the party.

"The fact that you don't contest is one thing, many people don't want to be active in politics but they want to participate.

"I think this is the best avenue for them," he added.

"We have people like that, I don't talk about Malays, I don't talk bumiputera, I talk about the

country," he said.

"The party is formed by what is the state of the nation today where every Malaysian is concerned about, it's no more about Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, but it is about how to save the country," he stressed.

Speaking to reporters after submitting an application to register Bersatu with the Registrar of Societies (ROS) on Tuesday, Muhyiddin said the party was open to all Malaysians.

However, the party's normal membership will be open to only Malays, the bumiputera, the Orang Asli as well as Sabah and Sarawak natives.

Non-bumiputera is welcome to join the party, but as associate members who cannot vote nor contest for party posts. They can, however, be appointed to party office.

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