

**And discounts for BMWs, first-class travel too  
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Senator Tunku Abdul Aziz Ibrahim lashed out today at Umno leaders who have criticised his party's publicity secretary Tony Pua for his call to abolish the seven percent discount for bumiputeras on luxury property purchases.

judiciary crisis forum 290907 tunku abdul aziz In a statement today, the DAP national vice-chairperson (right) said he was "appalled" at the action by Umno Youth in lodging police reports against Pua on the matter as well as Prime Minister and Umno president Najib Abdul Razak's strongly-worded statements on the matter.

While Umno Youth claimed Pua's suggestion was seditious, in breach of the federal constitution and the social contract, Najib had warned Pua against causing dissatisfaction and anger against Malays and becoming a threat to public peace.

"It is clear that these so-called Umno leaders have little or zero understanding of the federal constitution, for try as I might, I could not find a clause or article in the constitution which suggests that Malays or bumiputeras are given the right to discount for property purchases.

"There's certainly nothing enshrined in the constitution which says that Malays are entitled to discounts for luxury properties costing millions of ringgit," said Abdul Aziz.

NONE At a dialogue session on the Selangor government's budget last month, Pua (left) - who is also Petaling Jaya Utara MP - said the discount for bumiputeras should be done away with since it had nothing to do with alleviating poverty among bumiputeras.

The discount also served merely to turn bumiputera house buyers into middlemen for non-bumiputeras in order to reap the profits accorded to them by the seven percent reduction on luxury property purchases, said Pua.

Abdul Aziz said if the seven percent discounts for such purchases were so cardinal to the 'special position' of the Malays, then such practices should also extend to purchases by Malays of such luxury items as "BMW's, Porches, home-theatre systems, first-class air tickets or even jewellery and precious stones."

"The discount for the purchase of luxury properties is one of the clear cut abuses of the New Economic Policy (NEP) which needs reform to ensure that it is the bottom 40% of income earners who receive the benefit from affirmative action.

"As such I complete support the suggestion by the Selangor Menteri Besar (Abdul Khalid Ibrahim) to consider abolishing the discount applied to luxury homes but to use the 'discount' to set up a housing fund to help poor bumiputeras," said Abdul Aziz.

He added that Umno and its Youth wing's "ignorance and abuse" of the constitutional provisions on bumiputera rights is a blatant attempt at protecting the rich and wealthy "Umnoputras" who wants to continue to enjoy such discounts when purchasing their luxury homes.

"Umno's reactions also clearly demonstrate that they have no sense of pride and self-worth, for seeking to protect such entrenched and distortionary benefits at the expense of the poor and less fortunate. "Malays as a race should be proud that there are those who are now able to afford such properties, and we should be proud to be standing on our own two feet with (despite our) handicaps."

Hadi Awang vs Tony Pua?

malaysiakini interview loh seng kok 061108 03In a related development, deputy chairperson of MCA's publicity bureau Loh Seng Kok (left) took a jibe at Pakatan Rakyat for its component parties' purported inability to reach a consensus on concrete policies.

Citing PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang's alleged disagreement with Pua over the bumiputera discounts on luxury property purchases, Loh said shows that Pakatan parties "obviously" run on their own agendas.

"The opposition's marriage of convenience is unable to reach consensus when it comes to drafting policies. Such a development has again proven that Pakatan is unable to walk the talk," said Loh.

"Pakatan makes remarks in a high profile manner to please its supporters but such remarks hit a brick wall every time when opposition parties try to come out with a common policy, let alone attempt to implement the policy.

"This trick pulled by the opposition has been the same since the 308 General Elections and it has not changed a bit.

"PAS' decision to reject DAP's proposal confirms that Pakatan's internal negotiation mechanism is immature as PAS, DAP and PKR are only able to exploit the media for a cheap shot at publicity gains but fail to resolve issues pragmatically.

"It will be the country's biggest disaster if Pakatan, a coalition without common a ideology, wins the elections and rules the nation," Loh added.

sibu by election hadi awangLoh, who is also MCA central committee member, was referring to press reports that portrayed Hadi (right) as having voiced disagreement with Pua on bumiputera discounts.

However, a video recording of the press conference held yesterday in Marang, Terengganu, showed Hadi as having spoken merely of the need to maintain affirmative action for Malays who make up the majority of the nation's poor.

"I have not seen it (Pua's proposal) in detail, but what I do see is the reality in this country that the majority of this country are the bumiputeras and the (majority of the) poor are bumiputeras.

"For that reason, we need to look at the majority of the people who are faced with the problem of poverty," Hadi was recorded as saying.

"At the same time, we are obligated to defend those of other races who are poor and should be protected. We cannot be unjust to them while defending ourselves," he added.

NONEOn the same issue, Hadi lashed out at the tendency for Umno leaders to pretend as if they were protecting the rights of bumiputeras when it was not bumiputeras who were on the receiving end but Umno and BN.

Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin (left) was reported today to have praised Hadi for upholding the federal constitution even if this might be in opposition to the statements of leaders of Pakatan component parties.

"I wish to thank him and congratulate him (Hadi) for making reference to what is in the (federal) constitution even though his statement is contradiction to the stand of the (other) opposition parties," Bernama reported Muhyiddin as saying.

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