

Malays cannot accept bumi equity cut, says Rais
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JELEBU – Dr Rais Yatim (left) has described the call by MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek for the gradual reduction of bumiputra equity, as running contrary to the constitution.

The Information Communication and Culture Minister said Article 153 of the Federal Constitution guaranteed the special position of the Malays and natives of Sabah and Sarawak and the legitimate interest of other communities.

"When he called for the gradual reduction of the 30% bumiputra equity in all sectors of the economy, he was going against the constitution of Malaysia.

"Maybe he did not realise this but I would like to remind that Article 153 is not a simple provision; in fact, it cannot be amended by any party unless with the consent of the Conference of Rulers and subject to provisions in Article 159 of the Federal Constitution," he told reporters after breaking fast at the Felda Pasoh 1 Mosque near here yesterday evening.

He said that although Chua might have tailored his remark to the political sentiment of his party, the Malays especially, could not accept it.

"If the call were to be implemented, firstly we would be going against the Federal Constitution and secondly, we would be undermining the position of the Malay rulers, especially the Yang di-Pertuan Agong who is responsible for safeguarding these interests.

"This is not a mere practice but something that has been accepted by parties involved in the social contract in 1956-57 when the Reid Commission was formed, and when the Constitution of the Federation of Malaya, and later the Federal Constitution, was formulated," he said.

Rais said he hoped that in future, political leaders would refrain from saying things as they please, and should recognise things that had become "pillars of the country".

These pillars, he said, should be accepted and not be changed based on current political sentiments.

"For instance, if Umno itself wants to amend Article 153, it won't be able to do so, let alone Datuk Seri Chua Soi Lek, because there are layers of powers protecting it," he said.

Rais said the constitution also provided safeguards for other communities.

If Chua wanted make a demand, he said, he could do so under this spirit of the constitution and not by denying the rights of the Malays and natives of Sabah and Sarawak.

Asked on Chua's statement that the MCA would not hesitate to share common views with the DAP for the sake of the Chinese community, Rais said Chua had shown that he no longer had respect for the vision of Barisan Nasional which is headed by the prime minister.

"The Malays should therefore unite in the face of this. If we are strong, we cannot be easily manipulated by others. We should unite and voice out to defend what is rightfully ours.

"If this is not done, then people like Datuk Seri Dr Chua will continue to undermine the

basis of our struggle," he said. - Bernama

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