

Raja Nazrin: Allow only honest officials to serve nation

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KUALA LUMPUR: People without integrity, honesty and morality should be prevented from holding public office.

The Raja Muda of Perak Raja Dr Nazrin Shah said the fight against corruption should see good governance with figures in authority being qualified for such positions.

He said the corrupt should be held in contempt by society.

"Those with a chequered past or clear evidence of questionable morality should be prevented from taking office.

"There should be zero tolerance for corrupt practices," he said in his lecture entitled "Towards a Decent Social Order for All Malaysians" at the Islamic Arts Museum yesterday.

The lecture centred on the works of the late Prof Datuk Dr Syed Hussein Alatas, with special focus on three themes that he felt most compelled to write about.

These were religion as a positive force in development, mental liberation from colonial and western patterns of thinking, and creating conditions for good governance, particularly the eradication of corruption.

Raja Nazrin said Syed Hussein had fought tirelessly to elevate integrity and justice in society and to correct social ills, of which the battle against corruption was his top priority.

"Values and principles based on integrity and social justice, as enunciated by Syed Hussein, are crucial as mental attitudes and values are what shape a nation's development.

"There must also be concrete anti-corruption measures and management practices based on efficiency, transparency and accountability.

"Syed Hussein also placed great store on the power of public outrage. He believed that if you awakened society's consciousness to the ills of corruption and gave such cases widespread publicity, it would generate an adverse reac-

tion that would force the government to take action."

Raja Nazrin outlined five traits needed for a decent social order which would produce social norms and behaviour that were fundamentally efficient, productive and just. They were:

- A social order that led to cohesion within and among communities and called for horizontal equity whereby all Malaysians in equal circumstances were treated in exactly the same way;

- Malaysians of all races and religions engaging one another with absolute civility and respect;

- Malaysians feeling a deep-seated sense of ownership over the problems of the country and being motivated to take decisive action and make whatever sacrifices necessary for the good of the country;

- Only Malaysians who were capable, hard working, bold and scrupulously honest being allowed to serve in positions of responsibility; and,

- The public having a high degree of trust in the pillars of state, the executive, judiciary and legislature, as well as the civil service and police.

"In short, a decent Malaysian social order would be one that is based on inclusiveness and accommodation as opposed to marginalisation and discrimination.

"Indeed, if Malaysia professes to be an advanced country, it had better be prepared to meet a higher standard of behaviour and morality. Anything less and it runs the risk of being declared a shameless sham," Raja Nazrin said.

The lecture was part of the Al-Bukhary Lecture Series organised by the Al-Bukhary Foundation and was attended by over 300 people.

The Raja Puan Besar of Perak Tuanku Zara Salim and Syed Hussein's wife Datin Zahara Alatas were also present.

Syed Hussein's son Assoc Prof Syed Farid Alatas read a citation on his late father's works prior to the lecture.