

# Nazri's statement shocking: Lim

The Sun - 12/4/2007

At the **Dewan Rakyat**

by **B. Suresh Ram**

newsdesk@thesundaily.com

**OPPOSITION** Leader Lim Kit Siang described as "astounding" the statement by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz on the proposed Inter-Faith Commission (IFC).

"What was he saying? You mean to tell me if the Malays do not want to participate, the Federal Constitution cannot be upheld?" Lim asked.

Nazri had said on Tuesday the IFC can only be formed with participation from all communities of different faiths and amendments to Article 121(A) of the Constitution.

"He said my arguments were valid but there is no way the Barisan Nasional (BN) government would agree because there is no way to convince and persuade Malays, who constitute the majority of the electorate, to support such a constitutional amendment," Lim told reporters at Parliament lobby.

"His arguments are unacceptable ... it's setting a dangerous precedent for the erosion of the constitutional guarantees in the Merdeka Social Contract of Malaysia as

a democratic, tolerant, multi-religious and secular nation with Islam as the official religion but not an Islamic state."

Lim said he had stressed that the amendments to Article 121(1A) of the Constitution in 1988 were to provide Muslims with the constitutional protection for their rights to be adjudicated in Syariah courts without detracting the rights of non-Muslims.

"In the past few years, particularly after the '929 Declaration' of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Malaysia is an Islamic state, non-Muslims here have seen their religious and constitutional sensitivities and rights adjudicated in civil courts and Syariah courts eroded.

"The time has come for an amendment to the Constitution to make it clear that Article 121(1A) does not derogate the rights of non-Muslim Malaysians which they had enjoyed without challenge before the 1988 Constitutional amendments," he said.

On corruption, Lim said the time has come for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to summon a special meeting of the cabinet to exclusively address the worst corruption crisis in the country's history.

This, he said, was to demonstrate the political will to arrest, prosecute and jail top political government leaders for corruption.