

'DR M'S CLAIM HAS NO LEGAL BASIS'

Deputy minister refutes ex-PM's statement that promoting Malaysia as a multiracial country is unconstitutional

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TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad's claim that promoting Malaysia as a multiracial country is unconstitutional is without legal basis, said Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Ramkarpal Singh yesterday.

He said Dr Mahathir himself had recognised Malaysia as a multiracial country during his terms as prime minister.

"As a former prime minister for more than two decades, of course Dr Mahathir has had access to legal advice through the attorney-general and is therefore aware of the legal position on this matter.

"Clearly, he is aware that his statement is baseless."

Ramkarpal said. Any amendment that has the effect of changing the basic structure of the Federal Constitution is unconstitutional.

"Article 3 also provides that religions other than Islam can be practised peacefully in any part of the federation."

He also quoted Article 8, which forbids discrimination against citizens solely on the grounds of religion, race, descent, place of birth, or gender, and Article 11, which gives people the right to profess and practise their religion.

"All the provisions of the Federal Constitution, when read together, reflect the recognition

that Malaysia is a multiracial, multicultural and multi-religious country."

On June 3, Dr Mahathir said in a Twitter post that promoting Malaysia as a multiracial country was against the Constitution.

He was responding to Bukit Gelugor Umno information chief Mohd Huzaidi Mohd Hussin's calls for him to stop playing up racial sentiments.

"I am just voicing out what is stated in the Constitution. It's not against the law to defend the Constitution.

"But what is against the Constitution is promoting the country as a multiracial country."



Ramkarpal Singh