

# Dr M's statement is legally groundless says Ramkarpal

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement claiming that it is unconstitutional to promote Malaysia as a multi-racial country is legally groundless, says Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reforms) Ramkarpal Singh.

He said the statement by Dr Mahathir, who served as prime minister for 23 years and had never questioned Malaysia's status as a multi-ethnic and multi-racial country during that period, was deeply regrettable, especially when he recognised Malaysia as a

multi-ethnic and multi-racial nation during the same period.

"As a former prime minister for over two decades, it is certain that Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had access to legal advice through the Attorney General, and therefore, he should be aware of the legal position regarding this matter.

"As an elderly statesman, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad should be aware of the importance of the phrase 'unity in diversity should be our strength and not our shame' in Malaysia, as stated by Federal Court judge Tan Sri Zainun Ali in the Indira Gandhi

case, and take heed from the phrase," he said in a statement yesterday.

On Dr Mahathir's claim that there was pressure for Malaysia not to be known as an Islamic country, Ramkarpal said that Islam as the religion of the federation had never been questioned, as stipulated in Article 3 of the Federal Constitution.

Ramkarpal said the Federal Court, in the case of Dhinesh Tanaphill versus Crime Prevention Board & Others in 2022, stated that Article 3 of the Federal Constitution regarding religion

was part of the fundamental structure of the Constitution that Parliament could not amend through constitutional amendments.

He said any such amendment that affected the fundamental structure of the Constitution was unconstitutional.

"Article 3 of the Federal Constitution also provides that religions other than Islam may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the federation. Article 3 of the Federal Constitution proves that Malaysia is a country of various races, cul-

tures and religions," he said.

Furthermore, Ramkarpal added, Article 8 of the Federal Constitution prohibits any discrimination against any citizen solely based on religion, race, descent, place of birth, or gender, and Article 11 of the Constitution also grants every person the right to profess and practise their religion.

"All these provisions of the Federal Constitution, when read together, reflect the recognition that Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multireligious country," he said. — Bernama