

**Opposition Needs To Rectify Negative Perceptions Propagated To Malaysians -
Chandra Muzaffar
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 3 (Bernama) -- Opposition parties need to rectify negative perceptions that they have propagated to the people to avoid polarisation between the races in the country from growing worse.

Yayasan 1Malaysia Board of Trustees chairman, Dr Chandra Muzaffar said the major challenge faced by the coalition of opposition parties was "their sincerity in curbing certain political sentiments that would be detrimental to our country if action is not taken from now."

"Polarisation accompanied by tension among the races will invite political instability which will affect the economic environment," he said in a statement titled "Take a lesson from 13th General Election (GE-13)" here Monday.

Chandra alleged that the DAP, since its inception in 1966, "exploited anger and frustration among most of the Chinese and part of the Indians which related to the special position of the Malays and Sabah and Sarawak bumiputeras in the Malaysian Constitution and New Economic Policy (NEP)."

The impression given by DAP to the non-Malays and non-Bumiputeras was that the government was awarding everything to Malays and bumiputeras, while the non-Malays and non-Bumiputera were discriminated and treated as 'second-class citizens'," he said.

Chandra said the exact situation of economic, cultural and politics of society in this country was much different from the perceptions formed by DAP, whereby the Chinese are in the strongest position in the top and middle-level economic hierarchy.

Furthermore, Chinese language and culture experience which is supported by the Chinese education system is very widespread in this country, and this is a phenomenon that does not exist in any country outside China and Taiwan, he said.

"Likewise, Chinese involvement in national politics," he said, adding that , even in a privileged position and NEP implementation, sometimes eligible non-Malay and non-Bumiputeras, failed to get a place at the university level or scholarships or contracts and business licenses, but these specific cases cannot form the basis for making false conclusions that the Chinese overall are oppressed.

Chandra said due to their failure to change the government in GE13, DAP and the Chinese should ponder deeply about their position, history and context of the multi-ethnic society in the country, as well as the future of race relations in this country.

"In all honesty, try to understand the economic, cultural and political reality of our society and act in a balanced manner based on this reality. This is a huge responsibility for DAP's top leadership and also the Chinese intelligentsia," he said.

Chandra said as for PAS, the party must correct the perception it is trying to instill among young Muslims that the approach to Islam must be "pure Islam" that it believes is the answer to all challenges face by the country.

"PAS' approach that has features in common with some countries that declare themselves as 'Islamic states' and Islamic movements in other places, has been questioned by Islamic thinkers because it is more concerned about the "skin from the flesh of religion"," he said.

He said that was why these countries failed to provide concrete meaning to social justice and human dignity, including the dignity to women.

PAS should delve into the question that is still sparking debate about the role of an Islamic party in a multi-racial society that functions in political environment of the 21st century.

Touching on Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR), he claimed that the party was 'swept away in a shallow sentiment torrent that is obsessed on an individual'.

"Of course, such obsession is totally against the environment of the 21st century. PKR members should emancipate themselves with this old-fashioned shackles," he said.

Chandra also questioned PKR advisor Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who until now had failed to prove allegations that the government committed fraud in GE13 on May 5.

Every wild accusation by the opposition such as 40,000 Bangladeshis flown in as phantom voters and a 'black out' in Bentong, until now has failed to be proven, even though the opposition continued to hold a series of rallies as a sign to reject the GE-13 results, he said.

Chandra said Anwar's accusations and allegations obviously had no basis because the GE13 results were evidently fair, where the opposition managed to increase their parliamentary seats to 89 seats, the highest in the country's political history and maintaining political power in three states with a large majority.

"If there is evidence fraud has occurred in any of the constituencies, the EC and legal experts have repeatedly emphasised that the opposition can file petitions in court," he said.

Chandra claimed that the protests were Anwar's political agenda to achieve his ambition to become Prime Minister and affect the credibility of BN government, but he will not achieve his goal because the majority of the people know the GE13 results were fair and reflect the reality of sentiments and political leanings now.

He also praised the approach taken by BN government in handling the opposition's rallies, avoiding violence but only charging some activists for violating certain laws.

Chandra also advised the BN to focus on the challenges that are yet to be overcome such as the rising cost of living, especially in urban areas, control the price of goods, providing affordable housing and efficient public transportation and comprehensive and fair salary structures.

Also prohibiting members of state executive councils, cabinet ministers and high ranking officials of the civil service and relatives from bidding for contracts or government projects during their tenure to fight corruption, he said.

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