Najib's Bumi agenda is unconstitutional, says law professor
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BY LEE SHI-IAN

The new measures and strategies to empower the bumiputera economy are a violation of the Federal Constitution which promises equality, said Universiti Malaya associate professor Dr Azmi Sharom.

He said the Bumiputera Economic Empowerment agenda announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak on Saturday is not supported by law.

"These provisions are not mentioned in the Constitution but no one is coming out to say this," said Azmi at a forum in Bangsar Baru today titled "50 years of democracy: Has it weakened or strengthened our Federal Constitution", presented by the Malaysian Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights (MCCHR).

The other speakers were lawyer Tommy Thomas and Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS) chief executive Wan Saiful Wan Jan. The forum was moderated by Bersih 2.0 co-chairperson Datuk S. Ambiga.

Azmi said if these new measures were challenged in court, the constitutionality and legality of Najib's announcement would be in grave doubt.

Thomas pointed out that most of the government-linked companies (GLCs) were already controlled and heavily staffed by Malays.

"Malaysia Airlines (MAS) and Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) have both been reporting losses over the past couple of years. Why doesn't the government hire non-Malays who have proven to be very successful in the business world?" Thomas questioned.

"There are a lot of non-Malays who are doing brilliantly in the corporate world but the government seems to be intent on driving these talents away from Malaysia. In the end, they are grabbed by companies abroad.

"We lose one million good and talented Malaysians but end up with five million poor immigrants whom we welcome with open arms and identity cards. Malaysia has gained a reputation for being an extremely welcoming country for immigrants," Thomas added.

"The public is not blind, they can see the injustices happening and if their complaints are not heard, if they continue to suffer, they might resort to other means to change the government instead of through peaceful and democratic process," Azmi warned.

"It is the lack of democracy which causes chaos. There are many who are wondering why they voted for Najib and Barisan Nasional, especially in light of all the controversial comments made by his Cabinet members recently."

Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's comment that Malaysians who were unhappy with the country's political system should leave the country drew a barrage of criticisms from various quarters.

A week ago, Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor told

Malaysians to stop complaining about the skyrocketing price of properties. He said if houses were expensive they should not buy from the developer; and if they do they shouldn't grumble. He said everyone was bound by the "willing buyer, willing seller" rule.

A few days ago, Second Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh came under fire for telling parents that the government will not stop them from sending their children overseas if they were unhappy with the education system in Malaysia.

Azmi described these ministers as infantile based on the statements which they had issued. He expressed disappointment that this was the level of discourse being practised in Malaysia now. - September 16, 2013.

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