

**Perkasa chief warns of fresh race riot if Malays not helped economically**  
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**BY V. ANBALAGAN, ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR**

Right-wing group Perkasa has warned of another racial riot if the majority Malays remained poor, saying the Najib administration had done the right thing by introducing a new affirmative action programme.

The RM31 billion Bumiputera Economic Empowerment Plan (BEEP) is meant to raise the economic status of the Malays after the failures of previous plans but critics say it repudiates the market liberalisation moves in Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's New Economic Model (NEM) launched three years ago.

"What guarantees can you give that if the situation remains and nothing is done to help the Malays there will not be another May 13?" Perkasa president Datuk Ibrahim Ali asked, referring to the 1969 race riots, Malaysia's worst in history.

The one-time government deputy minister said the welfare of the Malays, who form about 60% of the 29 million population, must be taken care of to guarantee security and political stability.

"The racial riots on May 13, 1969 occurred because Malays were not satisfied," he told The Malaysian Insider in an interview in Kuala Lumpur.

Ibrahim said less than 30% of the nation's wealth was in the hands of the Malays despite more than 50 years of independence.

"This is what I am repeatedly telling Umno leaders. What is the use of having tall buildings and excellent infrastructure when the Malays continue to remain poor in their country," he said, referring to the iconic 88-storey Petronas Twin Towers.

He said the Malays needed help now because the business environment had become more challenging as the world had become borderless.

Ibrahim, who lost his Pasir Mas parliamentary seat in the May 5 general election, said he was not talking about bread and butter issues.

"Nobody is starving here. Even those living in squatter areas own cars. I am concerned about the Malays having their fair share of the economic cake," Ibrahim said.

His concerns reflect those of right-wing politicians in Umno who have prodded Najib to have more favourable policies for the Malays.

On September 14, Najib announced several steps to further boost the economic participation of the Malays, further entrenching race-based policies.

The measures include privatising some government services and granting more government related contracts to firms owned by the Malays.

Najib also announced measures to boost entrepreneurship, home ownership and opportunities in education and employment for the Malay majority.

The Malays have benefited from wide ranging affirmative action privileges since the introduction of the National Economic Policy in 1971 but critics say it has stunted Malaysia's competitiveness and led to a huge brain drain of non-Malays.

After he took over in 2009, Najib had portrayed himself as a reformist who would roll back the privileges that have slowed down investment and marginalised the non-Malays.

However, the reforms failed to materialise due to stiff resistance from warlords within the Najib-led party, Umno.

The minority ethnic Chinese are about 25% of the population, are wealthier and still dominate the business sector.

Ibrahim said Chinese businessmen were raking in millions in profit in activities prohibited by Islam.

"They run gambling outlets and entertainment centres. The Malays who are Muslims cannot get involved because it is against the religion and also immoral," he said.

He said if Perkasa was a racist and religious extremist group, "we could have gone to the streets and protested to close these outlets, but we respect our friends".

Ibrahim said the Chinese could survive because they have a strong grip on the economy.

"They control the supply chain and have a monopoly over many economic sectors. But they are unhappy when the government announced affirmative programmes for the Malays. Be fair, lah," he said.

He said the Chinese who controlled the private sector do not offer much help to the Malays.

Ibrahim also said some financial institutions imposed conditions on Malay businessmen, fearing they would default on loans and become bankrupt.

"These things (being bankrupt and not settling loans) also happen to Chinese businessman but why pick on the Malays?" he said.

He said more banks and financial schemes to specially cater to Malay traders should be set up to spur the community's participation in commercial activities.

He also blamed opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for the non-Malays becoming bolder in their demands.

"He went around promising them this and that if he was appointed prime minister," he said.  
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