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Umno must take initiative to bring Malays forward to achieve agenda

Shukor Rahman

WHOLESALE Richard Lee, 44, of Bandar Baru Farlim, Air Itam, Penang, did not mince words when asked what he thought of the recent controversy over former DAP State chairman Teoh Teik Huat applying to join Parti Keadilan.

"Why all the fuss? For all those claiming to champion the cause of democracy, anyone should be allowed to join whatever party they like.

"Anyway, most businessmen don't care two hoots. We are more concerned that business has slowed down somewhat after the Chinese New Year," he said.

Such single-mindedness of purpose (in this case giving priority to his business and making money) is the difference between Chinese and Malays in this country.

Not so long ago, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Rais Yatim reminded young Malays that their failure to understand the Malay Agenda could be detrimental to the future of the community.

Many young Malay professionals, he said, did not know the Malay Agenda and the struggles of the community and advised them to understand Article 153 of the Constitution.

"When it comes to education and economy, we are laggards. The only thing that is left is our political strength," he said.

Political analyst Kassim Ahmad said many Malays were not aware of the rise of neo-colonialism after the Gulf War.

"In the struggle for more freedom and basic rights, many have been used by Western propagandists who have spent billions to subvert Third World democracy," he said.

Kassim said many Malays also did not understand the concept of Melayu Baru (the New Malay). "Instead of adopting the culture of Melayu Baru, many of them have lost their roots," he said.

(Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has defined Melayu Baru as one who is learned, courageous in facing challenges and whose faith in Islam is unflinching.

("Melayu Baru are also trustworthy, sincere, broadminded, tolerant and would not brand other Muslims as being unIslamic," he said.

("Melayu Baru are not alcoholics, gamblers, womanisers and do not reject Islam and Malay customs like what is being attempted by those who wish to see the Malays remain backward and unable to deal with modern-day challenges.")

"We must go back to proper religious teachings, and not the dogmatic and fanatical type as propagated by Pas," said Kassim.

He said Muslims must follow the teachings of the Quran to settle disputes and differences among themselves.

He also hit out at those planning to carry out street demonstrations to topple the democratically-elected Government.

"Such demonstrations can lead to violence which will in turn destroy the country. We must ask ourselves, who are the ones behind the demonstrators?" he said.

Kassim also hit out at Pas for focusing its campaign in Kubang Pasu, the constituency of Dr Mahathir.

"It is merely a Pas strategy to embarrass the Prime Minister but they cannot fool the people all the time," he said.

Kassim welcomed Umno Youth's efforts to go down to the grassroots (Pemuda Umno Masuk Kampung) in Terengganu and also its study of problems

faced by Felda settlers in Pahang. He hoped that Wanita Umno would emulate this.

"Umno must seize the initiative from Pas in order to bring the Malays forward to achieve the Malay Agenda," he said.

Umno Lebuh Macallum branch secretary Farid Kamaruzaman said the younger generation of Malays seemed to be "lost and drifting".

"The tidapathy attitude of the Sixties seems to have made a comeback and they are taking too many things for granted."

"There seems to be no sense of direction and even less striving for excellence," he said.

Farid added only a small number of Malay youths had taken up technical courses at Universiti Sains Malaysia or UITM in Permatang Pasir, or taken advantage of small loans provided by the Government for young entrepreneurs.

"They continue to be mired in social problems such as lepak, and if things do not change soon, it would be most difficult for them to meet the challenges of IT or to achieve the aims of Vision 2020," he said.

Ramlan Raji, deputy leader of Umno Kampung Manggis branch, said many Malay youths were too choosy and preferred to remain jobless when the country was enjoying full employment.

"At the same time, the dadah problem has not abated. Apart from heroin, many have also resorted to cough mixture and sniffing glue," he said.

Last year Gabungan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung (GPMS) revealed that its study showed that Malay youths were involved in most of the crime in the Federal capital.

Ramlan suggested that those with low academic qualifications should take up vocations such as motor mechanics which can ensure them a good income.

He said he knew of a Chinese motor mechanic who had been an apprentice at the age of 10.

The Prime Minister himself feels that the Chinese can be business models for Bumiputeras.

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