

21/06/2002

Shock treatments may be just the right remedy to treat lapses in Malay psyche

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THOSE who parked their cars at Perhentian Putra discovered that someone had placed on their windscreens flyers promoting traditional massage to rectify male impotence.

The masseur is Norjae Hadi, who used to have his picture holding a large, outdated model of a handphone in newspapers.

At the Putra World Trade Centre, several stalls erected at the foyer appeared to be selling herbal products supposed to improve male virility.

It is not a new phenomenon. For the past decade at least, promotion of aphrodisiacs, traditional massage guaranteeing improved sex life and herbal products for virility, have been a common feature at stalls set up at Umno assemblies. On the surface, it seems that the Malays are obsessed with sex or, at the very least, very concerned about their sex life.

However, it can be deemed that the Malays are more forward-thinking compared with the West, which only recently discovered Viagra.

The question is whether the quality of the Malay products (or services) can compete with those of the West.

The issue of these products may seem distinct from what the Umno assembly is all about, but the principles involved are actually intertwined. For one, if the West spends millions on research and development to come up with a product like Viagra, which has side-effects, the Malays did not have to spend that much to come up with their own versions.

And the local products are guaranteed not to have any side-effects, based on the claims made by the traders. From these small-scale industries, the Malays are not left in the lurch in facing competition from bigger issues.

The present Umno leadership has alerted them, apart from providing the opportunities for their participation in global concepts such as the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

Other efforts include making the Malays realise that they can build the tallest building in the world, turn local corporations such as Petronas into multinational entities and send students abroad for an international education.

It is an on-going effort that must continue, but the question is how much of these efforts truly reach all levels of Malay society.

Even those who have discovered success and are aware of what is required of them suffer from what can be described as Malay lapses.

As noted by Deputy Johor Umno Youth chief Jaigani Jaafar, these lapses are not something to be taken lightly:

"As we have seen in some of the matches in the present World Cup soccer, some highly-ranked teams lost because they had lapses."

Hence, Jaigani added, the need for shock treatment to ensure the Malays get out of their lapses, especially when they have proven that they are capable of competing not only with other races domestically, but also in the international arena.

Jaigani is actually qualified to say this. A true-blue kampung boy, Jaigani was a top student in a university in California, making the Dean's List ahead of other students, be they Americans or other international students.

His success and ability to compete is not an isolated story. Other Malay

students sponsored by the Government to go abroad have matched if not bettered Jaigani's feat.

Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob shared Jaigani's views on the need to dish out shock treatment to the Malays to jolt them out of complacency.

"If we do not do that, complacency will creep in. To get back on track may prove more difficult than when it all started."

To this, Jaigani contends that party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is merely practising his skills as a medical doctor.

"When a patient suffers from a lapse, shock treatment is dished out. Then, the doctor will see how the patient responds to the treatment."

His analogy is quite apt.

For the past few assemblies, Dr Mahathir has repeatedly reminded the Malays on the need to prepare themselves to face the possibility of losing their privileges and quotas in the future.

While the privileges and quotas have not been removed as yet, certain elements such as meritocracy and allowing non-Bumiputeras to join institutions previously identified as only for the Malays are being implemented.

These moves are no doubt the shock treatments dispensed to the Malays.

Much will depend on how they respond. If they do so positively, with their confidence growing and competitiveness sharpened, more of these privileges may be removed.

At this stage, the response towards the shock treatment seems varied.

But whether the Malays like it or not, they do not have much choice as the changing world has no place for crutches, privileges and other protections.

Their only choice is to make the best of these privileges while they are still available, reduce their lapses and put their best foot forward.

For starters, there is an aphrodisiac for men named Kras Trus 2 produced by an Umno-linked company and distributed at the PWTC.

A little bit of R&D, good marketing and attractive packaging will make it ready for the international market.

Viagra producers can eat their hearts out.

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