

**Pakatan's 100-day reform plan: Malaysia unbound**  
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COMMENT You could call it 'Malaysia Makeover Phase 1' – this Pakatan Rakyat 100-day reform plan, enunciated a week ago at its second annual convention in Kepala Batas.

You could also call it by more grandiloquent terms like 'National Recovery Plan' or 'Malaysia Revival Programme', as both are appropriate to the necessity of the task and its gravity for our future.

Definitely, the latter two labels have got more oomph if less alliteration.

But they suffer for reason of their ready comparison to such monikers as 'Great Leap Forward' and 'Marshall Plan' - the former a misnomer for a murderously disastrous plan that brought much grief to China, and the latter a programme of economic aid that helped western Europe revive after the devastation of world war.

No, Pakatan's 100-day reform plan is less hubristic in its goals, though surpassingly vital for the reform of the Malaysian polity.

Malaysians above 40 years of age know the fear the abuse of the ISA by the government had caused the people from their recall of Operation Lallang in 1987 when more than a hundred political and social activists were detained without trial.

They also know what the police force was before the sharp surge in shooting deaths of suspects 14 years ago led to public expressions of concern that reached a tipping point when Anwar Ibrahim emerged with a black eye while in ISA detention in September 1998.

Thus the rescinding of a baleful statute and the restoration of freedom from executive interference for the police would be a radical departure from the status quo under Umno-BN.

### **Revitalisation of the teaching profession**

One is not saying that with these two steps, all would begin to be well with what ails the country; only that, absent these two measures, the rest of the list of reformatory acts – there is a raft of them that begs attention, ranging from reform of the judiciary to revival of academic standards in public universities – would take more time and could not be as adequately sustained, minus ISA nullification and police independence.

The latter two actions are germane to 'Makeover Malaysia Phase 1', which is really all about the country's essential rescue from Umno-BN's decades' old deformations.

Other measures are not as equally critical to the makeover of this country, but they indicate the flight path of a Pakatan administration though Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin has already accused Pakatan pilots of ignoring the constraints of gravity.

Giving teachers a RM500 raise across the board is just an early signal of how significant the revitalisation of the teaching profession would be under a Pakatan administration.

We need not advert to what HG Wells said about education as being the race between civilisation and catastrophe for us to recognise that good teachers remain the blood plasma of a country.

Hence the RM500 raise is like an emission from instruments that pick up seismic activity under the sea that warn of an impending tsunami.

Our education system is due for a tsunami of change and the teaching profession will early be primed for the task under the initial propulsions of a Pakatan administration.

### **Society needs impartial arbiters**

The other reforms, outlined in the Pakatan 100-day programme, are necessarily ancillary to the radical two steps of ISA rescinding and restoration of independence to the police.

Without so much as indicating that other agencies for good governance would be similarly freed under a Pakatan administration, the latter two steps would cause peer pressure and generate a healthy sense of competitive rivalry to make the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and the Election Commission to follow suit as impartial arbiters.

That Pakatan has indicated that they would indeed free these two agencies in the first flush of their reformatory ardour only serves to underscore the urgency of their intentions and their certainty that the public would back them unreservedly.

The Pakatan 100-day reform plan is the opposition coalition's response to Malaysian society's urgent hunger for change in areas where such change matters the most.

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