

No escaping BN campaign, even in public areas
Malaysiakini.com
March 2, 2011

Merlimau boasts a brand-new mosque in the middle of town and like many other mosques across Malaysia, its minaret is equipped with a loudspeaker.

These days, however, it is more than the azan and Quranic verses that can be heard from Masjid as-Syuja'ah.

"Jews control the economy in the United States because it is their country, and in Malaysia the Malays do not control the economy but instead they control the politics.

"So you have to support the party which protects and uplifts Malay martabat (dignity)... I hope that people will make the right decision at the polls so our martabat can be maintained," said the person giving the ceramah prior to the Isyak call for prayer on Monday.

Subtle as it may be, the message is consistent with flyers found around the constituency implying that voting for Pakatan Rakyat is like gambling with the future of Malays.

Said former Negri Sembilan menteri besar Mohd Isa Samad at a campaign event in Permatang Pasir on Monday: "When you lose (in an area) it's very difficult to win it back. We lost Kelantan in 1990 and we still haven't managed to get it back.

"So take care of Malacca properly. We are afraid (of what will happen if we lose). Care for this country, it has so much potential but not if we make the wrong decision, so don't make a mistake."

Similarly, a leaflet displayed a newspaper article headlined Melayu hilang kuasa (Malays to lose power) next to a photo of former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad crying, captioned "Anak cucu bagaimana?" (What will happen to our children and grandchildren?).

Fishing for votes from teachers

Students, too, were listening as BN top leaders campaigned hard at the SMK Dang Anum on Monday afternoon.

In his speech at an award ceremony at the school, Malacca Chief Minister Mohd Ali Rustam even asked the audience of 15-year-olds, their parents and teachers to raise their hands if they are Merlimau constituents.

And when they did, he said: "There are 311 teachers voting (in Merlimau)... the (Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin) has raised allowances."

"Ada ubi ada batas lah kan," he added, citing the first two lines of a traditional Malay pantun about debts of gratitude.

Pulling out all stops for BN candidate Roslan Ahmad, who was in the audience at his alma mater, Mohd Ali also said that he believes that people know how to "hargai jasa" (be grateful when others show kindness).

Muhyiddin, whose entourage had streaked through Merlimau in a whirlwind tour on Monday, gave the teachers something to be grateful for.

Early in the day he announced RM18.4 million to principals and teachers as part of the "new deal" incentive under the National Key Results Area, and SMK Dang Anum was in for a surprise.

"I heard that you need to build a multipurpose hall, costing more than RM2 million. (The chief minister) will help fund half of the construction and I will fund the other half, God willing," he said to applause and cheers.

Not far from the high-performing school, Indian residents in Merlimau were treated to a concert by RTM radio station Minnal FM at the local polytechnic college the night before.

The concert, co-organised by the local MIC branch, featured dances by Universiti Malaya, Universiti Putra Malaysia and Politeknik Merlimau students.

"Half the cost is borne by MIC and the other half by RTM. Of course this is because of the by-election," said Malacca MIC Youth chief P Shanmugam.

Up for grabs that night were hampers, a LCD television set and mysterious gift-wrapped items. All the audience needed to do was to listen to Mohd Ali give his campaign spiel and join him in the '1Malaysia, We Support BN' rah-rah before the concert.

He even asked the audience for a show of hands of voters, and told them to vote for BN candidate, Roslan Ahmad.

'BN not guilty'

Another BN leader spotted on school grounds on Tuesday was Deputy Women, Family and Community Development Minister Heng Seai Kie of the MCA.

Unlike the CM, the senator only handed out aid to the poor without any blatant campaigning.

As such, when asked if BN is misusing public facilities for its campaign, she said: "This is not a campaign because I, during the function, had not urged the public to support BN," she said

"What I said was just support Najib's 1Malaysia and be thankful for the harmony and support BN's efforts in promoting harmony. When I ask for support, I never used the word 'voter', but used the term 'people'."

She added that 1Malaysia has never been a party slogan and there is nothing wrong with promoting national policy in schools.

Yesterday, PAS Youth had lodged a complaint with the Election Commission against BN misusing public premises as its operation rooms in Kerbau.

A similar police report and EC complaint was lodged by PAS in Malacca over the use of the polytechnic college by BN prior to the campaign period.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/157456>