

Remembering those who perished in detention
Malaysiakini.com
April 8, 2011

Come to think of it, what the BN government admonished recently does hold water after all. Malaysia is no Egypt and it never will be, in all likelihood.

A politician lawmaker hollers that male promiscuity is because of the conjugal failure of their wives. Only a handful protested in the new media. Everyone else is happy at the warong and 24-hour restaurants; and for many, it is a joke that made their day good.

Someone is reported to have died from fall from a multi-storey building while under official investigation, and again, only a few more blast through the new media at the breaking news. But for the masses, it is either "who cares?", or a naive "ya kah?" or "tak berani cakap".

Of course the "tak berani cakap" (dare not say anything) culture is perverse. You can actually test it out. Walk into any Customs office now and ask audibly about Ahmad Sarbani Mohamed's death and see the hushed, evasive and even sullen, shuddering looks you will get. You cannot go against your paymaster, you know!

The IGP only has to point a finger on government-owned television, 'advising' the rakyat to mind their own business while investigations are under way, and life returns to normalcy.

In fact, do not be surprised too if many households did not even watch that news segment, for it is the Malaysian way of life to catch up on household chores during news breaks in order not to miss out the soap operas.

We have read scores of allegations and all kinds of news pieces in the new media, like that by Raja Petra from London.

These are dismissed as "60% lies". For the rakyat, it makes good fodder during lunch breaks - nothing beyond. For most people these are cases of "jangan sibuk jaga tepi kain orang" (mind your own business) or "jangan hancur periuk nasi anda, bro" (take care of you rice bowl, brother).

For example, the latest being the exposé that someone lied in Parliament in connection with the commissions paid out for weapons purchase. Want to take a bet? Nothing will come out of it!

Malaysians are very different from other people around the world. Politics is alien to them. It is viewed as having no connection whatsoever to their economics, social and environmental development.

No wonder that Dr Mahathir Mohamad kept insisting college students must stay out of politics and hammered the University and Colleges Act through.

Never mind if he himself nailed anti-British sentiments on tree trunks in his hometown during the prime of his youth. Oh, but that is a different generation you know - a generation that got independence for a colonial nation.

Even the iron-clad rule of Suharto was no match for the citizens of Indonesia. The Marcos saga is history. The Thais have their own 'Egypt' well in place. But fortunately, or unfortunately, Malaysia is very unique. There is no Egypt, no Indonesia, no Thailand and no Philippines situation.

But ask any Ah Kow, Samy or Abu in town and they will lament readily that Malaysia is very corrupt. Press on as to what they can do about it and they will purr, "saya siapa?" (who am I?).

Talk to the media boys and girls. Ask them, what's up bro? And they will retort, "you should know better lah, mate". Press on why they are not writing about it and the answer is a plain "why, you want me to be a homeless Joe (or Jane) kah?"

Now that the Sarawak election is in the air, you can see it all the more vividly. Campaign trails mean announcing more allocations; admonishing that you will pay the price if you do not vote for me; and of course, not forgetting the nice goodie bags.

After all goodie bags are part of Malaysian culture, that is, meeting the expectations of the people - "tak ada apa-apa kah, boss?" (don't you have anything for me?).

In summary, it is purely a case of 'who cares, as long as there is something in it for me'!

Yes, there have been individuals and organisations that have tried to stand out like a sore thumb. But their fights have proven to be treacherous for them. Either they are silenced or they just burn out. Why? - because Malaysia is never going to be another Egypt.

For Malaysians, the BN-led government cannot be wrong. In fact, that is the clear message that emanates from all of the Mahathir publications.

So, do we still fault the evergreen ruling coalition? That well explains why even Hilary Clinton did not hesitate to praise the government of the day, and even went so far as to taunt the region by saying that Malaysia is a good example to emulate.

Oh Malaysia! So unique to Asia!

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/160985>