

Reform can only start when the gravy train stops
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YOURSAY 'The patronage system in Umno is killing the party slowly without the prospect of proper renewal.'

Emulate Gorbachev, Najib advised

your sayFaz: PM Najib Razak is in no position to initiate reforms apart from paying lip service as he is carrying too much excess baggage. The warlords know that and as long it's just lip service, Najib is basically ignored.

The trouble with Umno is systemic and not specifically Najib. The patronage system which is in place a very long time ago in Umno is killing the party slowly without the prospect of proper renewal.

The only option for Umno to refurbish itself is for Umno-BN to lose the next GE at the federal level. Then the gravy trains will come to a complete halt, depriving the warlords of the war chests to finance their battles in Umno and the GE.

Only then, the long forgotten rank-and-file members (who never pay their yearly membership subscription - the division head pays for them), will acquire the strength to fight back the warlords on an equal footing.

Hopefully, they will have enough sense left to right the wrongs and rebuild Umno as a competent rival to Pakatan Rakyat at local, state and federal level.

Cala: Ex-Minister Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir spoke much sense when he appealed to Najib to walk the talk by emulating one-time Soviet Union general-secretary Mikhail Gorbachev.

To me, two issues are testing Najib's resolve in pursuing his goal (assuming that he means it). First, institutional change takes time. The moment he shows his commitment to change, subsequent actions will be made easier.

So the emphasis should be on incremental change. He has to start by removing people like Women, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, stop persecuting opposition leaders, be transparent about government procurements, no fooling around by enforcement agencies, etc.

Second, now this topic may hurt, but it is as real as the sun - it concerns culture.

Najib would have to try triply hard than Gorbachev did when the latter allowed nature to take its course (allowing Soviet colonies to break away and embrace market economy).

The big issue here is: can he make Islam compatible with democracy and can he rekindle democracy for subsequent economic growth and development?

Anonymous: You are absolutely right, Kadir, but the problem is, is PM Najib brave enough to carry out the reforms?

Solaris: Kadir, you say there is a lot of unhappiness among Umno's three million members who are aware of government corruption, cronyism and leakages and are clamouring for "radical changes".

I think it's closer to the truth to say that the only members who "clamouring for radical changes" are the unhappy ones who missed the gravy train of corruption, cronyism and leakages.

Open Minded: Najib can be credited for trying hard to bring about the much-needed changes that could ensure the continued growth and progress of the nation devoid of abject corruption and cronyism.

But the outcome of these bold steps is opposition to change from within the party hierarchy who dread losing out on all the riches and intoxicated power so soaked in their mental reservoir.

A system based on nepotism that has existed for so long can only be replaced by a system of fresh and new ideologies that only a new ruling government can provide.

Umno, which is founded on Malay political aspirations and then moving into political dominance and control, cannot at this stage provide any new impetus and energy for the new awakening occurring in the country.

Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim may not be the full answer for the anticipated change, but he can bring about some much-needed reforms.

Nik V: That has always been what all the rakyat of Malaysia have been asking for. Reform in words and actions. We are not asking for the perfect or sinless leader.

Does not Malaysia actually have a courageous, charismatic and chivalrous leader who is capable of leading Malaysia out of this darkness?

Perhaps it isn't going to be Najib if he does not stand up to the plate. Perhaps it may not be Anwar.

But for now, till somebody lives up to the standards that Malaysians demand, Pakatan and Anwar, Nik Aziz Nik Mat and Lim Guan Eng are the closest we can get to seeing a greater Malaysia.

1M: I appreciate Kadir's view. Although it could have had more credibility if spoken while he was still in PM's line-up, I reckon that the atmosphere was probably absent during that time.

Judging from Najib's character, I doubt he has the political will like that of Gorbachev's. After all, they are from totally different leagues. As such, I still believe real reform will only come with a change of government.

Pakatan may not necessarily be better than BN in running the country, but reforms will take place nevertheless as both Pakatan and BN would know by then that the rakyat is the real master of this nation.

Swipenter: Najib does not have the character and gumption to go against the Umno warlords and the right-wingers. He is a fence sitter and procrastinator just like Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, and unlike Mahathir.

Both of Najib and Abdullah have soft ears and like to "play safe" not knowing that "playing safe" is their weakest point.

We may detest Mahathir for the things he has done to our country to maintain his political grip, but we have to acknowledge that he got the cunning, guts and character to do things his way come what may.

DontPlayGod: Swipenter, Mahathir got his way because he was doing what the warlords like, and that is playing the racist 'ketuanan' card. This won over the warlords.

Sarawakian_3ff9: The truth hurts, doesn't it? But Najib should listen to Kadir because he's right.

It took a long time for someone from Umno to say it but many Umno members would definitely agree with Kadir, as most of us certainly would.

Najib should also get out of former PM Dr Mahathir Mohamad's 'sarong' and be his own man. Mahathir is

no longer that powerful as he himself would want Umno people to believe.

Most Malaysians see him as a bothersome old man who cannot accept that he's no longer the despot running the country.

Cut your umbilical cord from Mahathir and the rest of the warlords will toe the line. And start to walk your talk because so far all we hear is rhetoric.

As they say, talk is cheap. But then again, perhaps it's too late for Najib.

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