

Najib's best time for GE13 has gone

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By Lim Kit Siang

First, let me pay tribute to Malaysians, particularly in Petaling Jaya and Selangor, for their public-spiritedness, powerful sense of justice and the ability to distinguish between public right and wrong.

They have been splendid in their one-week response online and offline in the support for DAP MP for PJ Utara, Tony Pua, among the foremost warriors for the water rights of the people of Selangor, who lost the first round of the defamation suit by Selangor water concessionaire Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor (Syabas), with the Kuala Lumpur High Court awarding RM200,000 in damages to Syabas.

Pua is appealing against the KL High Court judgment but Syabas is demanding payment of the RM200,000 in damages.

If Pua is finally vindicated and wins the defamation suit against Syabas, the collection will go to the DAP's national funds to be expended for the forthcoming general election or for other public interest litigation cases.

Pua's defamation suit is one of the many tests and challenges DAP leaders have to face after the political tsunami of the 2008 general election, which saw an unprecedented change in the national political landscape.

Five Pakatan Rakyat state governments were formed - Selangor, Penang, Kedah, Kelantan and Perak - although an unconstitutional coup subsequently robbed Pakatan of the Perak government.

However, we are confident of winning Perak back in the next general election, and maintaining the unprecedented denial of BN's two-thirds parliamentary majority.

The whole country and all Malaysians will be faced with two critical tests when the long-delayed 13th general election is finally held, whether in another two or three months or next year.

Hijacking National Day, Malaysia Day celebrations

Time has run out for Najib Abdul Razak and his window to choose the best time to dissolve Parliament so as to seek his own mandate as the nation's sixth prime minister has long been lost, particularly after the Bersih 2.0 rally on July 9, 2011 and Bersih 3.0 rally of April 28 this year.

Najib should be aware of his plight, which explains his desperation to the extent that he has to hijack the National Day and Malaysia Day celebrations as part his GE13 election campaign.

He is insisting that the BN campaign theme of "Janji Ditepati" (Promises Fulfilled) is adopted as this year's theme for the National Day and Malaysia Day celebrations.

National Day and Malaysia Day should be national occasions where Malaysians, regardless of race, religion, region, class, gender, age and most important of all, political beliefs and affiliations, can come together as Malaysians first and last to celebrate the attainment of Merdeka on Aug 31, 1957, and the formation of Malaysia on Sept 16, 1963.

But when the Prime Minister is politically desperate, he cannot anymore see the clear and important distinction between the nation and the parties-in-power or among the government, political parties and private personal interests.

It is the failure to make the important distinction between the nation and the parties-in-power, or among the government, political parties and personal interests that is the real cause of the overwhelming misgoverning of the country, whether in the form of gross abuses of power, massive corruption or rampant cronyism.

Powerful reminder to stay united

From now until Malaysia Day on Sept 16, let the "Janji Ditepati" slogan all over the country be a powerful and constant reminder to all Malaysians that they must stand united to demand for change in the 13th general election if they want the promises of democracy, justice, progress and clean and honest governance in Malaysia to be fulfilled!

In retrospect, the best time for Najib to dissolve Parliament was either to hold the 13th general election simultaneously with the Sarawak state general election on April 16 last year, or in the three months after the Sarawak state general election and before the Bersih 2.0 rally on July 9, 2011.

But with his characteristic indecisiveness, Najib has lost the initiative to choose the best time to dissolve Parliament. He can only choose the next best timing in the remaining nine months that is left before the 12th Parliament is automatically dissolved on April 29, 2013, with 13th general election to be held latest by the middle of May next year.

GE13 will be a critical test for Najib, not only whether he can lead Umno /BN to win the next general election to get his own mandate as the sixth prime minister, but whether he can win with better results than his predecessor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, so as to fob off and foil any Umno attempt to topple him in the way Abdullah was toppled in 2009.

Malaysians will decide whether they are sufficiently impressed by Najib's premiership, his "1Malaysia, People First, Performance Now" slogan; various transformation programmes whether government, economic, political or social; and finally, his "Janji Ditepati" roadshows.

Do Malaysians feel safer in the streets?

Has Najib "walked the talk" of his 1Malaysia slogan and made Malaysians more united than ever or is there greater polarisation, whether of race or religion, in his three years as Prime Minister?

Do Malaysians feel safer in the streets, public places and even the privacy of their homes despite all the publicity about Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and National Key Result Areas to reduce crime?

We have the scandalous situation where fighting crime is increasingly outsourced as witnessed in the mushrooming of gated-and-guarded communities. But the fear of crime is even more palpable in many places now than in the past!

Have we achieved the other NKRA in fighting corruption? Two days ago we marked the third death anniversary of Teoh Beng Hock, the victim of cruel injustice perpetrated by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), which must bear full responsibility for Teoh's death because of abuses of power by MACC officers.

Can Teoh's family expect justice, as promised by Najib to them that "no stone will be left unturned" to find his killers? The answer is no, that only a Pakatan Rakyat government is prepared to open a high-powered investigation to get to the bottom of the killing of Teoh Beng Hock and to bring the killers to justice.

Has MACC succeeded in fighting corruption, bringing to book the "big fishes", as is happening in Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Hong Kong and China?

That Malaysia has fallen to the lowest 60th ranking in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2011, with the lowest CPI score of 4.3, is a double indictment of the failure of Najib's GTP and NKRA to fight corruption in the past three years.

Although the 13th GE will be a critical test for Najib, it also poses two critical tests for Malaysians: whether Malaysia has matured as a democracy and as a nation 55 years after Merdeka.

For the first time in the nation's electoral history, Malaysian voters will be going to the ballot box knowing that they have the power to effect a democratic change of government at the federal level.

Will they dare to do so and will they be allowed to do so?

Forces at work creating fear, hatred and distrust

Already, forces are at work to disseminate lies to create fear, hatred and distrust, with Umno/BN raising an army of 10,000 cybertroopers to stoke racial tensions with dishonest and unethical "spins" and downright falsehoods.

I have just seen the latest issue (May 2012) of Selangor Kita, clearly a BN/Umno publication although it does not carry the identity of either the printer or publisher.

Blazoned on page 2 in a special box are the words:

'KOMEN LIM KIT SIANG TERHADAP AGONG KITA'

"SUMBER DAP: Lim Kit Siang dalam komennya berkata Raja-Raja Melayu semuanya Lanun. Semuanya Perompak. Kata Lim Kit Siang lagi, buat apa hormat Agong, buat habis wang ringgit cukai rakyat sahaja beri pada Raja-Raja Melayu."

This is a downright lie and falsehood, for I have never made any such comment.

Through the Internet, Umno/BN cybertroopers spread the vicious lie that I was responsible for the May 13 riots in 1969 and that I had roamed the streets of Kuala Lumpur after the 1969 general election result, hurling anti-Malay abuses resulting in the May 13 riots.

In actual fact, I was never in Kuala Lumpur on May 10, 11, 12 and 13, 1969, something which could be easily verified in the media at the time and by the police records.

I was standing for parliamentary election in Bandar Melaka in 1969 and on the morning of May 13, 1969, I had taken the morning flight to Kota Kinabalu to help in the election campaign of Sabah Independent candidates as polling for Sabah/Sarawak in the 1969 general elections was staggered for two weeks after that in Peninsular Malaysia.

I was in fact advised not to return to Kuala Lumpur after I was evicted from Sabah by the then Sabah Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha because of my public rally speech in Kota Kinabalu.

On the morning of May 14, 1969, a team of Immigration officials came to my hotel in KK to serve the eviction order on me. But I did not leave Kota Kinabalu until May 15 as I missed the outgoing flight on May 14. As there was no connecting flight to Subang as curfew had been imposed, I stayed in Devan Nair's house in Singapore for two nights.

Eight-year-old also behind May 13 riots?

I kept in contact with party leaders and my family by phone and they advised me not to return as I was on the Internal Security Act "black list" and would be arrested.

I told party leaders that not returning to Malaysia was not an option for me, that I would be failing in my duty as a just elected MP if I did not return to the country to be with the people in their hour of need.

On May, 17, 1969, I took the flight back from Singapore and was arrested at the Subang Airport. Then began my my first ISA detention.

Would I have returned to Malaysia if I had caused the May 13 riots?

In fact, during my first and second ISA detentions in 1969 and 1987 respectively, I was never asked any question about my whereabouts on May 10, 11, 12 and 13 of 1969 during the intense Special Branch interrogations, for the simple reason that the police knew I was never in Kuala Lumpur.

But what is even more monstrous is the accusation by these Umno/BN cybertroopers that Lim Guan Eng was also responsible for the May 13 riots of 1969 on the grounds that

Guan Eng was the DAP Youth leader at the time and was in the forefront of anti-Malay attacks.

In actual fact, Guan Eng was only eight years old in May 1969. This illustrates how dirty and unprincipled politics has degenerated in Malaysia in the run-up to the next general election, that such a despicable and contemptible accusation could be levelled against an eight-year-old child!

I understand that there is a new film on May 13 which will be making its premiere in the theatres on Sept 13. Is this part of the diabolical conspiracy and campaign to demonise the DAP and the Pakatan Rakyat to plant racial distrust, fear and hatred among Malaysians in the run-up to the 13th general election?

I will not jump to any conclusion but I would like to know whether it is possible to have a private screening of the film before its premiere, so that we know where we stand.

Be that as it may, the critical test for the Malaysian people in the next general election is whether Malaysian democracy and Malaysian nation-building have matured sufficiently to debunk all these dirty politics and ensure that Malaysians will not succumb to the irresponsible and diabolical politics of fear and lies.

Malaysians, regardless of race and religion, should stand up as Malaysian patriots who are prepared to cast their votes because of their love for the country and for the sake of their children and children"s children and, in a common national endeavour, use the democratic process to bring about peaceful political changes.

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