

Najib's daylight heist
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Watching Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak entertain BN supporters at the Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil was like attending an orgy of greed and self-indulgence at a crooks' convention. In what could be the final line-up of BN leaders before they disappear from public view, Najib's last act encapsulated Umno's rule - corruption and abuse of power.

His final attempt at wooing voters with cash handouts will corrupt the nation's morals. Most leaders encourage their citizens to follow honest and hardworking paths in life, but not Najib. He is a feckless prime minister, a dishonourable Malaysian and a moral degenerate.

To cries of adulation, Najib announced various increases in handouts like the BR1M payment. He denied that these were "vote-buying" tactics. When he said that some payments would be given yearly, the crowd burst into a frenzy.

Former PM Mahathir Mohamad is allegedly the driving force for establishing the evils of corruption in Malaysian politics, but is Najib an evil conspirator or is he a victim, too?

Clearly, Najib attracts some sympathy. Son of a former prime minister, born into privileged Pahang society, a ladies' man and a bon viveur, Najib wants for nothing and could have used his impressive lineage to help the rakyat.

At the launch of the BN manifesto, Najib charted his political ascent: "I started as a backbencher, then deputy minister, then minister, menteri besar, deputy prime minister, then PM. The principle of my struggle is that of loyalty to my superiors. I served under three prime ministers and was loyal to all. Was Anwar loyal? Definitely not."

The untimely death of Najib's father, Abdul Razak Hussein, catapulted Najib into politics but few would be impressed by Najib's lacklustre performance as a career politician. Ironically, Najib's personal tragedy lies along the path that led him to wealth and power.

Despite his political pedigree, Najib cannot empathise with the rakyat. His other encounter with "normal" life, was a brief stint in the corporate world. He sees little of the rakyat's suffering and has experienced few hardships in life.

One could always argue that Anwar has proved his loyalty to the rakyat. He dared to challenge Mahathir, but was punished: however, to what or whom is Najib loyal? Money, power or both?

The moment Najib started to milk the taxpayers' money, he became a prisoner of the system. Our leaders are good at taking what does not belong to them.

Mahathir dispensed with transparency, accountability and responsibility. Cronies were

encouraged to embrace a culture of entitlement. They are used to receiving something for nothing. Mahathir compromised our work ethics, our culture of honesty, sense of values, respect for the judiciary and the police, self-respect and respect for one another.

Offers of cash, with the promises of more, risk the nation's finances. Who foots the bill? Will the crowd be euphoric when taxes are increased? Will they be jubilant when subsidies are reduced?

Corrupt leaders have studied and worked the system to their advantage. Their success is mainly due to our apathy and our inability to ask challenging questions. Politicians succeed because they are able to massage the greedy side of our human nature. Whilst we were engrossed with our RM500 BR1M payment, we overlooked the billions of ringgits acquired by politicians through commissions and land deals.

Subsidising the lifestyles of the corrupt

Why should we subsidise the lifestyles of corrupt politicians? They live off us like drug addicts consume drugs. Like drug addicts, they are not interested in stable employment or earning a decent living through an honest day's work.

Najib is Umno's evil conspirator but he is not a victim, like us.

Najib is trapped by his lifestyle and the vicious cycle of fame and debauchery. Neither he nor his peers feel they have done anything wrong. They believe that they are entitled to the culture of "something for nothing".

Shahrizat Abdul Jalil has shown no remorse for the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) scandal, whilst Taib Mahmud has expressed contempt for the MACC in investigating allegations of his corruption. Both Najib and his self-styled First Lady, Rosmah Mansor, have denied allegations of murder, corruption and excessive spending.

The tragedy of Najib is that he is unprincipled. He could have achieved greatness by being an able leader, by putting his nation first; before him or his wife.

In times of crises, he invokes the memory of his father's good deeds. He is just trying to hide behind his father's laurels, like a child hiding behind his mother's apron. In the end, he failed everyone, including himself.

A few years ago, Umno politicians boasted of being able to trounce the opposition at the polls. The rhetoric gradually reduced to that of a hung parliament. If people could be used as a barometer for despair, then Mahathir is one. He entered the fray, and warned Najib that if he did not perform, his deputy would take charge.

Umno realised that their internal power struggles were turning the rakyat against them. They knew that a failure to win GE13, would signify an end to their political futures and personal freedom. They knew that if at any time one of them had fallen, they would all have

been toppled, like a house of cards.

Saturday's launch was an open show of bribery which shames everyone. Umno knows it faces defeat at the polls, but it has gone past caring.

Anwar Ibrahim is not perfect and it would be facetious to claim that the opposition parties are unblemished; however, only fools would be seduced by more lies that Umno needs more time to reform.

Lest people forget, Anwar's ill-treatment at Mahathir's hand awakened a moral desire, in each of us, to be rid of racist and religious bigotry, and the desire to establish a just and equitable society.

Even if Anwar could not continue with the struggle, the spark he lit has already ignited the embers of consciousness in most Malaysians.

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