

Ex-PM turns his 'Malay Dilemma' on its head
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YOURSAY 'If we can't afford housing for the poor, just build one palace for all to admire.'

Dr M: It's not cronyism, we need rich people

Awakened: Dr Mahathir Mohamad wrote 'The Malay Dilemma' in the 70s. This book highlighted the income disparity between the Malays and others and there is a need to restructure the economic system to make the Malays richer.

The New Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced with the purpose of eradicating poverty regardless of race. The objective of NEP was noble. However, when Dr M became the premier, the objective was gradually changed to 'enriching friends' through cronyism.

That is why you see the privatisation of power generation through the IPP (independent power producers), privatisation of water assets and distribution, APs (approved permits) for cars, monopoly of rice mills through Bernas, etc.

In his book, Dr M does not advocate meritocracy and fair-playing field. He argues that the poor need to be given some favour or 'handicap' like the golf game so that the poor can compete with those better off.

But today, he is talking the opposite. He is advocating that only the rich and capable should be helped through cronyism because only they can pay taxes, not the poor.

Onyourtoes: Mahathir was in fact saying if we can't afford housing for the poor, just build one big palace for everyone to look at and hopefully that will satisfy the pride of the poor.

Of course, with Mahathir's position, there will be people applauding him even if he talked rubbish. Few are questioning the existence of the rich in the country? It is how these people have become rich that we are contending.

True, the government must provide opportunities, but surely that does not include dishing out unfair contracts, monopolies, grants, licences and permits based on connections.

Just take KLIA (Kuala Lumpur International Airport) taxi and limousine service as an example. That opportunity would have benefit hundreds of entrepreneurs if licences and permits are given out to operators managing five to 10 taxis each.

Instead, the whole franchise was given out to one crony to the detriment of all taxi drivers and passengers.

Mahathir, how did you decide who is capable and who is not to receive favour from you when you were PM?

I am not hallucinating; I seriously think I am more capable than your son. But I can't even get to run a Petronas station even though I was naïve enough to apply for one when I was a young man.

I did not make this up: I went to the Petronas office (in Dayabumi at that time) and submitted my application forms together with my savings account as evidence I am financially sound. I did not even get a reply.

Did your son know how to fill up an application form? Of course I know he is worth billions now and therefore more capable than me. What other explanation can it be?

You know what; it is the undeserved rich, the cronies and the corrupt who are talking the loudest in this country today. They are not just corrupt, they are defiantly and arrogantly corrupt.

Wg321: Only Mahathir thinks that the poor do not pay taxes. Very soon, the poor will be forced to pay taxes through the GST (Goods and Services Tax) in order to reduce the burden of paying the national debt exceeding RM530 billion due to mega wastages and leakages as shown by the auditor-general's reports annually.

After the Kajang by-election, tolls will be increased. The poor not only have to pay taxes via the GST, they will have to pay for the hike in goods and services due to the mismanagement of the economy by the Umno-BN government.

I don't think that the rural Malay will not be affected by these double burden of paying taxes via GST and the simultaneous rise in prices of goods and services. How can a BRIM (Bantuan Rakyat Malaysia) of RM650 per year help the poor? This is just equivalent to only RM1.78 sen a day.

Obviously, a filthy rich man like him has lost touch with the suffering of the poor, both in the urban and rural areas irrespective of race.

Quigonbond: Whichever clever way Dr M slices it, when the government gives an expensive project to someone who does not know how to do it, and when they fail, uses tax money to bail them out, that's cronyism.

What's the point of Inland Revenue Board (IRB) receiving RM1 in tax for every RM1,000 of tax money spent on bailing them out?

We would rather you don't get any grant or concession from the government and we're perfectly fine without your pitiful tax ringgit that you would in any event have paid only after tax evasion, which evasion IRB wouldn't dare to take action on.

Anticonmen: It is not a question of rich and poor but policies to bring about equitable distribution of wealth that is important.

Many cronies who represent the BN thieves are obscenely rich at the expense of others. Equitable distribution of wealth brings opportunities to more people and more businesses.

Taxing a wider base of people brings in more revenue than taxing a few cronies who in fact mostly siphon their wealth away to overseas. Such **capital flight** has affected the economy to the detriment of average Malaysians.

Telestai!: How do rich people become rich? Plundering the state coffers, having an unfair advantage and exploitation of the poor are some of the common reasons how some people get rich.

Don't get me wrong - people do get rich through hard work and entrepreneurship but these are

few and far between.

The Bible says that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to go to heaven. Go figure!

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