

'Development card' may not work in future
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I refer to the letter Development shouldn't be synonymous with by-elections. Mat Al-Jajawi wrote: 'Why does it have to be this way? Why can't development be spread out more evenly and sincerely all over the country? Why wait for a by-election to bring development?'

Mat Al-Jajawi's statement, 'Why wait for a by-election to bring development?' is the most telling phenomenon among Malaysian politicians. Why?

All politicians know that the reason voters will elect them is when they can win the voters' confidence that they will take care of their (the voters') needs. But times have changed. Using goodies in the past with the poor and illiterate communities worked. Today, even poor people are exposed to the news and events of the day through 'global' communications tools. Even children have computer skills, hand phones and know how to SMS.

The TV and news that 'richer' communities in Kuala Lumpur, Petaling Jaya, Johor Baru and Penang watch are also accessible to the folks in Ijok, Batang Berjuntai and other 'poor' areas. If not in their homes already, the children bring the news when they come home.

Every election 'trick' has a life span, and today after Batu Talam, Machap and now Ijok we may be seeing the last days of this 'trick'. If politicians from both sides don't learn this lesson, they will be in a shock when the general elections comes about.

The downside of this situation is that should the BN learn their lesson after Ijok (whoever wins), they might call for a snap elections to use to trick for one last hurrah. I do not believe that the opposition has the necessary machinery to counter this on a national scale.

Lesson two - What follows from this is that the 'tactic' for next elections will have to be 'throwing in some human development - like education about the democratic process, press freedom, freedom of information, space for diversity of opinions, civic consciousness, etc?" as Al-Jajawi wrote.

This is the 'real' challenge for both sides, the ruling BN and the opposition. This requires hard work, excellence and total dedication by all politicians and I doubt whether they (the politicians) are ready. But ready or not, I believe that a new breed of 'holistic politicians' will emerge.

PKR's Khalid Ibrahim may have shown a glimpse of this when he articulated in his manifesto about bringing development to Ijok. Although his message was drowned by 'old school' rhetoric, many of the population in Ijok heard his clarion call.

The next general election is just around the corner and whoever does not follow up on the promises made at Machap, and more importantly at Ijok, will pay dearly. Yes, the BN and PKR promise to help bring human capital development to Ijok will be severely judged by the people in Ijok and the nation.

Remember the adage 'Think global, act local'. In fact, it is places like Batu Talam, Machap and Ijok where the momentum to really bring about human capital development should start (for Ijok) or should have started (at Batu Talam and Machap).

Otherwise the general population will not be convinced with all the powerful, entertaining, smearing antics of 'old school' politicians. From now onwards, those who don't 'walk the talk' will have to eat their words. The warning is out! Over to you politicians.

Thank you Mat Al-Jajawi for bringing some sense from all the nonsense that has happened. You restore my confidence that there enough balanced people in Malaysia who can see through all the rhetoric. We have to learn to recognise the woods and the trees.

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