

MPs: You can run but you can't hide
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Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and former deputy minister Tan Kee Kwong have revealed some of the corrupt practices that plague Malaysian politics.

Former ministers Dr Lim Keng Yaik and Mohamed Rahmat have been equally effusive. We welcome such openness and hope it will encourage others to be as honest and transparent.

The revelations of mismanagement, bad governance and scandals in office are enlightening. These politicians had the authority and opportunity to effect change, and yet they did nothing.

Were they threatened when in office? Or was a past indiscretion held over them? Was their silence bought? They certainly knew which side their bread was buttered.

Or are they gushing, because they perceive '1Malaysia' to be unravelling? Do they believe the rats are abandoning the sinking BN ship and so they wanted to be one of the 'good guys'?

Could the real reason be that they too, are masters in the art of politics?

Or, are they about to launch a new book?

To show candour after the event must seem courageous, but falls short of sincerity.

Still, they would have needed nerves of steel, to expose all the wrongdoings at the time they held their posts. That would have been the honourable thing to do. A politician with integrity and honour is a rare breed today.

Tan publicly accused premier Najib Abdul Razak of "single-handedly destroying" Felda's prudent management, siphoning its wealth and misleading both the parliament and the public.

lim keng yaik and water bill parliament pc 080506 pointing outEarlier this year, Lim (left), in an interview with The Edge financial daily, showed contempt for Najib's failing policies: "I give up lah, talking to this government", and expressed misgivings about the leadership of his Gerakan successor, Koh Tsu Koon.

He caused further outrage when he said, "Politicians who think they can become rich quickly by joining politics should be condemned and kept out of politics and government."

He also confessed that Gerakan should have moved into mature politics on a multiracial footing, but was dismissive of the proposal to separate from BN: "There is nothing to get out to, how to get out?"

Mohamed bared all in his book 'Impian'. He blamed PAS for influencing young Malays and warned Umno and BN that they could not practise protectionism among its leaders.

He claimed that his mission was to topple the PAS government in Kelantan in 1977, and that in Sabah in 1995, and downplayed the achievements of the opposition with, "Winning

four states is no big deal but running a country, is something else.”

His 'psychological-warfare' tactics in campaigns like Setia were because “The Malays were numb to political arguments”.

mohamed rahmat Furthermore, Mohamed (right) claimed the only way to penetrate people's minds is by provoking anger.

His obsessive and absolute allegiance to former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, despite his fall from grace, contrasts sharply with his oath of office, when he swore total allegiance to serve the Malaysian public. And as Information Minister, he acted irresponsibly by inciting anger.

When Tunku Razaleigh was in the Finance Ministry, he described how the government paid inflated prices for the procurement of weapons - like buying toys for the boys.

But his admissions are nothing new.

Why didn't those who were aware of these injustices or illegal acts do anything during their tenure?

Power corrupts

A friend from Alor Setar related how Mahathir used to give free medical services to the poor in Kedah. This is how most politicians started their transition into politics. The motivation for public service was high.

parliament briefing 030408 ramli ngah talibEven their characters were different then. Ramli Ngah Talib (left) was once a humble junior lawyer before he headed Perak, but failed to maintain the state's economic lead once he became menteri besar.

As soon as they amassed houses, cars and other trappings of luxury, they stopped serving the public and became self-serving and arrogant.

Suddenly, the man became bigger than the job – which is a classic example of how all-consuming greed gets in the way of talent.

Bribery and corruption have a terrible impact upon the poor and the vulnerable. It also undermines public services. There is an economic impact as the costs of doing business increase.

So it is important that the politicians and their cohorts are brought to justice, to increase confidence in our business and financial institutions.

Take for instance the allegations of massive military procurements by Najib when he was defence minister.

We were wrong to believe that, when the Najib administration came to power, he would set new standards for transparency. He didn't.

Time to set an example

And that explains our contempt and loathing for all the politicians, including individuals, who

took part in the various cover-ups. They dragged this country to its knees and tore apart a young nation.

Fair-minded citizens became demoralised, talent was driven out, our society became polarised and Malaysia gained a terrible reputation abroad.

Should we believe our political masters now? We've continually had the wool pulled over our eyes. Are we still being manipulated? Should we feel compassion for all the soul-baring and clearing of consciences?

Our leaders have constantly undermined Parliament, quashed democracy and bent the rule of law. They didn't have the political will to tackle corruption. Now, their denials are abhorrent.

Decades of BN rule have dulled our senses but they still continue to insult our intelligence with their lack of morals and their complete lack of integrity.

These politicians divert money to fund a lifestyle that is beyond their means. If Kartika was made an easy target for evil, beer drinking Muslims, then politicians – past and present – who are guilty of corruption should be severely punished as a deterrent.

If corrupt former politicians spent several years in gaol, it would send a clear message to those in Parliament. If the MACC, law enforcement agencies and the judiciary had acted properly, we would not be in such a mess today.

Losing our trust, is like losing your virginity. Once it's gone, there is no getting it back.

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