

Samy : racist mindset drowned BN
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The ruling coalition slipped into a political coma on March 8 when the unprecedented tsunami swept across the nation and buried Barisan Nasional under piles of debris. MCPX

Many political careers and ambitions drowned on that fateful day but the incident appears to have provided some component leaders with a new lease of life.

After being 'ballot-boxed' blue-and-black by their respective communities, these leaders - once known for their strict adherence to the code of conduct - are now openly breaking ranks and pointing fingers.

Explicitly or implicitly, the fingers point in the direction of Umno and the culture it has cultivated over the decades.

samy vellu interview 160408 01One such leader is MIC president and former works minister S Samy Vellu who was defeated in his stronghold of Sungai Siput while his party lost 18 of its 28 seats.

The veteran politician has repeatedly stated that he has raised numerous issues concerning the Indian community during his protracted spell as a cabinet minister. But this was not reflected on the ground.

In an exclusive interview with Malaysiakini at the MIC headquarters in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday, the 72-year-old politician conceded that while he spoke at great lengths during the meetings, his hands were however in a bind.

Although he denied that the component parties were subservient to Umno, Samy Vellu admitted that they were not treated as equals in the coalition.

The Malaysian curse

He also spoke of a curse which has been plaguing the country and attributed BN's electoral setback to those behind it.

"The government is of the opinion that when you introduce a programme, everybody will benefit. It is not so. The programme is drafted in such a way that certain people will never benefit," he said.

malaysians 050905"Even if it is meant for everybody, the person who delivers it will never allow it to be delivered. This is the curse in the country, the delivery system.

"The government would like to give everything to everybody, but the man who delivers will never do it," he added.

Samy Vellu stressed that while the government is not discriminatory, those in the civil service are.

"Anything for other races, they don't like to see it ... some of them don't consider us (non-Malays) as Malaysians. They are the ones who brought the Barisan down in this elections.

"It is not because people have love for (PKR leader) Anwar (Ibrahim), love for (PAS president Abdul) Hadi (Awang), love for (DAP veteran Lim) Kit Siang.

"You can see ... what is it that these three people have put together and presented to the country? A new formula for the country's benefit, nothing. They just went everywhere 'bang, bang, bang, bang'. They won by a fluke chance.

"They won, they became strong because we are weak," he said.

'Change the head'

Asked how this curse can be broken, Samy Vellu prescribed a startling remedy. "Barisan Nasional must change its head."

Sensing that it can be misinterpreted, the MIC president promptly explained that "the head" was in reference to the mindset and not the leadership.

samy vellu interview 160408 03"A new thinking," he continued. "The new thinking should be equal opportunities for Malaysians according to their percentage."

"If they don't do that, it would be fatality ... in the next elections," warned the architect.

In the past, Samy Vellu said he had explained to the government that it will be perilous for the BN to ignore the Indian community.

"They (the community) are almost in 65 to 70 constituencies, the deciding factor votes. If they fall on the other side, we are lost. But the government didn't believe it, which is proven already."

The Malay swing

To another question on the talk that Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi ignored the ample warning signs and preferred to rely on the assessments of his advisers, Samy Vellu said he does not believe the premier was given bad advice.

abdullah ahmad badawi pak lah working 061107"The PM, I must say, is a good man, a very simple man, he cares for the community. He's very respectful to everybody. But what went wrong was down the line.

"Let me tell you about the Ninth Malaysia Plan. Over RM100 billion is being spent, a few pages, I see RM3 million for the Indian community, building up a training centre for the youths who are already in difficulties...

"But there should have been a programme to uplift the Indian economic status in business, participation in industry, licenses, vendor system. All these should have been considered."

At this juncture, the MIC president shifted his focus to the significant swing in votes,

especially from the Malays, for the opposition.

"You see today the bumiputera votes went to the opposition. Why? Because they feel there should be equality in the country ... I never expected in my life that Malays will move in such a big magnitude to the opposition.

"The Indians, of course, for the first time have also moved. The Chinese (votes) have always been up and down," he said.

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