

Dodgy circumstances surround Kapar land issue
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When Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi blamed MCPX saboteurs and poor policy implementation for Barisan Nasional's setback, he only got it half right.

Worse than disgruntled party members, keris-waving and broom-presenting antics or even an unhappy ex-prime minister, many people had gotten fed up with scams perpetrated by BN politicians and their friends.

kapar land scam 050508 03Take for instance Kampung Perepat in Kapar. From a BN-dominated area in the previous election, Kapar which used to pick Umno, MCA or MIC candidates without a moment's hesitation, the area has almost totally fallen into opposition hands.

Following the March 8 electoral results, P Komala Devi (Kapar MP), Md Ghazali Amin (Meru state rep), Song Kee Chai (Sg Pinang state rep) and Norliza Ahmad (Selat Kelang state rep) had all fallen to S Manikavasagam, Abdul Rani Osman, Teng Chang Khim and Dr Halimah Ali respectively.

The lone BN survivor in the battle for four state seats here is Abdul Rahman Palil after his opponent Suzaimi Salam failed to show up on nomination day.

In the 2004 election, Teng was only one of two lonesome voices in the Selangor state assembly. Ng Suee Lim (Sekinchan) was the other. Today, 36 former opposition candidates now occupy the 56-seat state assembly and are now the government in Selangor.

Kapar, no different from other semi-rural areas in Selangor, ought not to have behaved very differently nor shifted its alliance away from its BN comfort zone if not for the injustice it felt.

kapar land scam 050508 m subramaniam"Fifty years, we've voted for Barisan but look at what it has brought us," cried M Subramaniam. "Cheated and conned from under our noses, we have been.

"I was one of the original people here in Kg Perepat to be offered land in 1981," he said, pointing to an area lying next to a bungalow last week.

"When we were offered the land (under the Revolusi Hijau), we were told that if we would be given the land a year after cultivating it," explained the 74-year-old.

But that didn't happen.

Instead, like many of his peers they were given the runaround when they approached the Klang Land Office for the proper land titles. From 1981-1996, the TOL holders under Revolusi Hijau renewed their TOL until they were literally chased off their land.

Given the runaround

The land, as another pioneer of the scheme, Vengu Veerapan, pointed out had suddenly become someone else's.

kapar land scam 050508 vengu veerapan "I had planted oil palm, banana trees and even vegetables there," said Vengu, indicating another area close to the bungalow.

"I was even reaping the fruits of our little plot until we were told not to come back in 2003. My land is now owned by a Chinese politician," said Vengu.

Documents provided by Vengu's son Nedumaran show that the land now belongs to MCA treasurer Lau Yin Pin.

Nedumaran goes on to explain that beginning from January 1997, the TOL holders were told not to renew the licences as their proper land titles were "on the way".

"A Mr Ramli of the Klang Land Office told this to us in 1997. He continuously told us until February 2003," said Nedumaran.

"His statement was supported by Mr Shamsul (Assistant District Officer Tanah), Mr Yusof Ghazali (Chief ADO) and Mr Ahmad Shafie ((The District Officer) at that material time.

"We had several meetings with the land office officials from March 2003 until February 2008. The District Officer handled this matter since the earlier one was transferred. (Ahmad Shafie, Noordin Sulaiman and Bakhtiar)

No conclusion was reached in all the meetings because the officers blamed the TOL holders for going to the media. Ahmad Shafie even asked for a public apology, otherwise the Land Office will take legal action, Nedumaran explained.

"It's not that we didn't try to get back the land as we have. We've gone to the Klang Land Office, former menteri besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo, MIC president S Samy Vellu, the police and even the Anti Corruption Agency but so far nothing has been done," said the frustrated Vengu.

"So how can we continue to tolerate such injustice?" he asked.

Land now owned by lawyer, family

The land, according to Subramaniam, did not go to some other poor person but to a local lawyer Anpalagan Ramiah.

"The bungalow you see there is his (Anpalagan). In fact, all the other structures (temple, a shed and several other single-storey structures) you see here all belongs to him," said Subramaniam.

kapar land scam 050508 04 Besides a bungalow and other housing structures, a small river directed to a lake filled with water lilies surround the area. A public road leading to the residence was found padlocked making it a gated community.

Malaysiakini attempted to talk to the owners of the bungalow but they were not in. Only two

workers (probably Indian nationals) were found there. We tried to ask them who owned the place but they would not answer.

Documents provided by the complainants indicate that the land belongs to Anpalagan. Besides him, other names which can be directly linked to him are his wife Thelagam Arumugam, sisters Vijayaletchmy and Alli, brothers-in-law Maniam Pakiry and Sagarar Munusamy (who holds a police IC) and father-in-law Arumugam Sundram also own land adjacent or near the bungalow.

Other relatives who are said to own land nearby include Sivaguru Munusamy, Subramaniam Muttuveeran and Kalemuthu Rajapanduan. Together, Anpalagan and his relatives directly own a total of 11 lots.

In letters provided to Malaysiakini, Sementa state rep Abdul Rahman Palil from Umno recommended the applications of Anbalagan and Maniam (vide letter dated 26 July 1996) and Vijayaletchmy (vide letter dated 8 June 1999).

Anpalagan and Thelagam are lawyers by profession and together listed law firm Ramiah, Mages & Partners in Jalan Ampang as the correspondence address in their applications. Anpalagan has also sat or is sitting on the board of directors of several listed companies in Malaysia and Australia.

Malay Reserve Land

Besides the land behind the gate, those outside it was not spared controversy either.

Lined with eight single-storey houses, renter Zakaria questioned the manner they were now asked to leave.

"Some of the people, sent by Anbalagan, came to ask us to leave recently," he said.

kapar land scam 050508 zakaria "When we said that we would not, they came to cut off our electric and water supply," said Zakaria (right).

Local resident for 20 years, Mohd Razali Jameran, was equally unhappy although he doesn't stay there.

"This is Malay Reserve land," he said, pointing to the terraces. "Over there (bungalow) is Indian Reserve while behind there is the Chinese Reserve land. I don't understand how this is now owned by an Indian."

According to the renters, the houses sit on the plot owned by Anbalagan's sister. Alli.

During the course of Malaysiakini's visit to the area, two policemen were called in.

When asked who had lodged a report, the officer said "they were told that people with parangs had come to the bungalow and they were told to come investigate the matter".

However, the constable could not provide any details as to who called his police station and soon left after deciding that Malaysiakini and the local residents did not provide any threats nor did they carry "parangs" as claimed.

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