

It's the PM's fault
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A Ghani Ismail

The dust settled quickly after Abdullah Badawi's kiss of death announcement on June 4, raising the price of petrol and diesel by 41 percent and 63 percent respectively. It was like the sun intended one last rising for the 'flip-flop' prime minister to sing his swan song. He is still refusing to retire, waiting to be cast out by delegates' votes in December.
MCPX

If there's ever a need for Umno to hold an emergency general meeting to oust the party president, the occasion is certainly here and now. Umno and the BN are defenseless against the people's woes now that prices have risen once again like the dead, to haunt.

His ingenious tiered-system of fuel pricing has only offered a lollipop rebate of RM 652 or about 800 litres of petrol.

While that rebate works out to 52 ringgit per month, the rise of gasoline price to RM2.70 will issue another general price-rise that will assuredly eat into the household incomes way above the paltry sweetener. Even house-owners will be losing more on the value of their homes.

In February 2006 when the price was raised by 30 sen from RM 1.62 to RM1.92, the effect was like the floodgates were opened and the general price rise that ensued, made consumers feel simply helpless watching the prices go up and up like hot-air balloons.

Control isn't a word of any value in Pak Lah's regime. Some brands of chilli sauces went up from RM1.25 to RM1.90 within a couple of months, confirming the suspicion that some really like it hot.

Why then did Abdullah decide on RM2.70 and then pay the rebate of RM52 a month (RM 625 a year) when the price could be much lower without the rebate and the floodgates effect could have been avoided, or lessened?

People are unlikely to forget that the price of diesel is now RM2.58, up one buck, meaning the prices of everything commercial will rise like Count Dracula.

If that's complicated, a simpler way of saying the same thing is why not decide on a lower price of fuel and forget the rebate?

abdullah ahamad badawi pm anti inflation pc 090608 01 Society is still haunted by the sudden general cost-climb caused by the fuel price-rise of Feb 2006. It was compounded by the cabinet's shameless incompetence to manage and control the effects of the price-rise that resulted in what appeared like a scramble for survival among manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors and retailers.

Until some brands, especially in the food category began to run beyond the reach of consumers, and are still climbing. Some essential and price controlled items like flour and cooking oil were hoarded by certain parties to force the government to agree to higher prices.

From here to hell

Petrol used to be only 78 sen until May 2004.

The senseless argument is that it is a global malady and Malaysia is not an exception even if we are a net exporter of oil. Ignoring that we are earning more in our exports and we are enjoying a much larger tax take since the tariff reforms.

Malaysians obviously are feeling themselves roped like dopes in a noose that has instantly brought home the point that the government is heartless and is being punitive.

Should Abdullah call for a snap-election anytime soon the debris that's strewn like bad intentions from here to hell would definitely be the pieces of the trounced BN.

Abdullah has been observed to be more and more isolated from the realities of Malaysian society. Now he is altogether lost.

After the February 2006 fuel price decision Abdullah decided to raise the salaries and living allowances of the government servants as an easy means to keep them happy. That happened against a shower of protests since that would compound the inflationary effects. He did not care and inflation indeed jacked-up more than four percent in the following months.

Now many are saying the prime minister is simply being punitive. He is punishing the people for voting the opposition in five states and in one Federal Territory and denying the BN the two-third majority in parliament for the first time in history.

syed husin ali book launch 150608 anwar.jpgIt is looking like it is either curtains for Abdullah or it would be unlikely for the BN to stave off a regime change- no matter the result of the Malay solidarity movement launched in early May- by Anwar Ibrahim's Malay-led supra-ethnic initiative for a multi-racial Malaysia led by Party Keadilan Rakyat (PKR).

The Malay intelligentsia is cold toward Anwar's PKR. They prefer Anwar to find his way back into Umno rather than force a supra-ethnic leading number to rule the country before the Malays are ready for such a change.

But where Malay interests and destiny are concerned, Abdullah is seen as having worn a mask. He inclined too much to Singapore and discontinued his predecessor's policies and vision, causing a decided net loss of Malay faith and confidence in him.

In his Monsoon Cup poly-caper in Trengganu it was discovered several billion ringgit of Trengganu's oil royalty (Wang Ehsan) somehow went missing and the mystery of the missing money now compounds the already squelchy reserve of Abdullah's misadventures. The stench from the financial manoeuvring has forced the sultan himself asking the state government to sort it out.

Abdullah has too big a credibility deficit. His crony from Penang, Patrick Lim, billboarded himself beside the premier in the Trengganu Monsoon Cup, while in Perth, his wife's multi-million dollar mansion has been Abdullah's holiday retreat and lair.

This same Patrick Lim is the brain behind the Penang Global City Centre (PGCC), a

multi-billion mega city development project now tilting to ruination. Penang fell to the Pakatan Rakyat in the 8 March elections.

This same man and his company somehow acquired several hundred acres of choice land at Batu Kawan as soon as Abdullah became prime minister according to some reports. The chunk of prime land is right beside where the Penang second bridge would begin on the mainland

Tigers leave stripes

Abdullah is self-entrapped, and speedily sinking deeper and deeper into disgrace he cannot halt and overcome.

His brand new cabinet he constructed without bothering to acknowledge the contribution and significance of Sabah, resulting in a couple of resignations, loud protests, threats to cross the floor and much of the premier's time wasted in the effort to sooth the wounded pride and feelings of a people who deserve much better.

This leader has told his party members he wants more time to rehabilitate Umno and to see through to completion the development corridors he planned. The northern corridor has since been blemished and bashed by the acquisitions of Patrick Lim while the eastern corridor is stumped by the missing funds belonging to Trengganu.

How can Abdullah lead an attempt to rehabilitate the party when as a Malay leader he is already assumed as baroque? He is nepotistic, placing family before society and nation. As in the Malay saying, tigers leave behind them their stripes and humans leave their names (Harimau mati meninggalkan belang, manusia mati meninggalkan nama).

Is Abdullah not already sullied? Is he really capable of the job he has to do, and the responsibility with which he must conduct himself as the leader of Civilizational Islam, or Islam Hadhari?

monsoon cup 260906 ships sailing boatsHe has serially bungled in the Trengganu Cup poly-caper, Penang Development Plan and dumped Mahathir's crooked bridge in deference to Singapore.

He has shown little concern for the development of Johor ports, the third Tanjung Langsat, should begin operating in a few months.

For how long must Johor be denied the right to use her own causeway for shipping?

Has Abdullah been at all with us, sharing our quest to keep hold of our sovereignty, and for our maturity and refinement?

Has he been true to the aspirations of Malays and Umno whose elders have asked him to restore democracy after he suspended it in the 2004 party Supreme Council election that frothed with accusations of 'money politics'?

And now we have this so-called tiered fuel pricing system that raised fuel prices. What kind of alchemy are we dealing with here? Abdullah did not even care to wait for improvements in public transport before leaping.

KTM's Komuter is now running on a schedule of 20 minutes per trip instead of 10 minutes and many areas are neither served by buses nor by taxis, Bangi old town and the surrounding villages and housing estates are one clear example.

This kind of policy blunder cannot be treated as a lark. This can amount to gross negligence of the economy, something that will certainly become overwhelmingly clear in a matter of a few weeks when once again prices of essentials would have breached the ozone layer and society would be hot, restless and feeling more threatened than ever before. It would lead to anomie.

So, which way is Abdullah going?

It's best for him to accept the verdict of the people and decide to go. Adios amigo!
A GHANI ISMAIL was a columnist with the New Straits Times.

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