

Anwar's expected victory and expectations
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Aug 26, 2008 has marked a memorable page in the chronicles of Malaysian political history. It will willfully refute the 51 years of Barisan Nasional's continued dominance in the legislature and the executive.
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However, this interjection comes with a landslide victory for PKR's de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, with a majority of 15,671 votes in a by-election in Permatang Pauh and his return to parliament after an enforced absence of ten years.

In the wake of this protracted victory, the Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak had euphemistically said that the victory confirms the dynamic nature of the democratic process in the country rather than conceding a humiliating defeat amidst uncalled for mud-slinging against the victorious candidate.

While we agree with Najib, we must however defer with his statement. Over the last fifty years, political grouses and grievances among the Malays and non-Malays have increased and has come to take on an overtone of vent and anger. The people have become emotionally angry with the Barisan Nasional government.

a. There has been a total absence of transparency in the process of tender for both Malay and non -Malay entrepreneurs. Instead, the politics of cronyism and nepotism has pretentiously mimicked the special Malay rights, whilst a large part of the Malay poor still depend on government hand-outs to celebrate even their Aidil Fitri.

b. Public universities and government schools were opened lavishly across the nation without consideration for the needs of such universities and schools. However, large numbers of schools constructed with millions of ringgit have since become dilapidated and unused whilst Tamil vernacular schools in need of rehabilitation have been deliberately ignored and left-out.

c. Petronas has become a very prosperous company but its accountability and responsibility to the people has gone unaccounted since 1973. A coterie few has been dominating the large numbers of its subsidiaries and some of its executives have been living like oil barons.

d. Some very few 'chosen' businessmen benefit from government contracts and most of the large businesses are centered around a few of these businessmen whilst the larger part of the business community has to linger on without much insight on how to continue to do business in a country where privilege dominates the right to do business in a honest way.

e. The honourable judicial system of the country - once renown for its integrity - has now become a laughing stock amidst the verdict of the royal commission investigating the Lingam Tape scandal. The commission has affirmatively said that VK Lingam and Ahmad Fairuz had colluded. What a disgusting collusion is this in the name of justice?

f. The prices of basic necessities such as rice, sugar, cooking oil, fish, chicken, vegetables have all become expensive amidst an inflationary trend of almost 27%. Real wages are not published by the government and hence the impact of this structural inflation - partly

affected by the rise in the price of the oil - is hardly known.

However, the increasing number of compressed passengers in the long buses and their humiliating plight evinces their problems of waiting long hours to catch a bus and going home late, aggravates the gravity of rising urban poverty.

g. The consolidation of money supply in the hands of a few banks and businessmen and laundering of money to overseas banks have made the nation cash-strapped while the issuing of credit cards rampantly to almost everyone even with barest of salaries has made every Malaysian in debt. There is hardly much savings.

While cost of living has increased the standard of living has decreased. Workers are finding it hard to have a good and decent lunch. It looks like the next few generations of Malaysians will have to work very hard to repay all these debts. Bonded labour of Malaysians instigated by the Barisan Nasional.

h. Senior citizens have been completely ignored. One can always watch them digging the rubbish bins on the streets and searching for empty beverage cans. They can sell them to the scrap dealer and make a few sen a day. What a way to survive amidst executive oil barons living like kings on these people's oil money.

Some ten years ago when Anwar Ibrahim was arrested for sodomy and sentenced to jail, some of us got together and formed Keadilan. Although we had anger and hatred against the government of Dr Mahathir Mohamed then for such gross injustice over a good upcoming leader, we had never thought that Keadilan would eventually emerge a harbinger for the destitute and the devastated.

Yes, truly PKR is the harbinger and the victory of Anwar Ibrahim at Permatang Pauh has brought about good news and good tidings for a prosperous and happy life in this nation.

Most people do not expect the great luxuries of life. While they admire the RM200 million jet for the prime minister, they have no inclination to own one for themselves. They have no further inclination to live shamelessly on the tax-payers money.

Most of us Malaysians have not been living happily for some twenty years now. Most of us Malaysians have always expected the gloomy side of life for the last twenty years. Can we expect some optimism hereafter?

The building of Twin Towers, viaducts and Putrajaya has not brought about a better quality of life for Malaysians. Is it not possible to build a home for a family? There are 26,000,000 people in this country. On the average of five in a family, we need only 5,000,000 homes.

On a average price of RM250,000 per home with the present price of raw materials, we will only need RM12.5 billion to complete this project. Less than half of the money that has been spent on Putrajaya.

It is not the Great Expectations of Charles Dickens but it is a good and happy life that most Malaysians expect.

Would Anwar Ibrahim's reentry into parliament bring about this change in the near future? The people are desperate for change.

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