

Go out with a big bang, Pak Lah
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The prime minister and Umno President has announced that he will not be contesting the Umno presidency in March next year and that on that day he would resign as PM. He also announced that during the next five months he would do certain reforms which he failed to do after the 2004 general election.

Now that he has little time to dillydally about his intentions, he should bulldoze through his reforms, sack those who opposed him earlier and who may still oppose him now because their ulterior motives could not be achieved if hindered by a just judiciary system.

1. So, the first legacy he could leave behind is the reform of the judiciary system. I am very delighted that he intends to present to parliament the Judicial Appointments Commission Bill. This is a very important Bill. On it hinges not only the appointment of judges and the promotion of judges, it also ensures that incorruptible, capable and impartial judges sit on the bench.

This, in turn, ensures that judges hear out both sides of the argument advanced by the prosecution and the defence and that there is no 'fixing' of judges and no 'fixing' of cases and no pre-judgement of cases. This will mean that there is fair judgement.

This will promote confidence in our nation by foreign investors and local investors. Now, with the credit crunch in the US and the bankruptcy of investment banks in other countries, investments will be hard to come by. So we need investors to have confidence in our judicial system. All, whether foreign or local, want fair play. Not foul play.

2. Anti-corruption is another big issue. the ACA should be independent and should act independently; and should investigate all cases, big or small; sharks or ikan bilis. 'All men are equal. No man is above the law.' Amen. The ACA officers should be given a free hand.

Unfortunately, they do not act freely, even if allowed to act freely. They, being human beings, are easily influenced to act against certain people (opposition leaders and NGOs, as had happened recently).

To be really effective, I would suggest that there be another agency named the Anti Anti-Corruption Agency (AACA) which was suggested by my late father some 50-odd years ago. The purpose of the AACA is to check on the ACA.

This is to ensure that the ACA is not corrupted. This is a check-and-balance thing. Note that the ACA officers are not angels and saints that walk on this corrupted world. They can be corrupted. Cari makan they may say when they see with envy some people who also cari makan.

3. The IPCMC, which was recommended by a royal commission, should come into force. The PM should put his foot down now; he has nothing to lose. After all, he is going. So he might as well go out with a bang. He may anger some police officers. He should know what to do with these people.

There may even be some 'big shots' who want to protect these police officers because such

protection goes both ways. 'You scratch my back, I scratch your back' - this is an old game. The best approach is to scrap all of them who try to block the implementation of this plan.

4. Inter-faith discourse. Interfaith conferences in the past had been disrupted. By having such discussions, we promote better understanding of each another. We cannot afford to allow bigoted religious groups to disrupt such discussions.

Respect all religions. All Malaysians should be allowed to follow any faith and no one should claim to be superior to others. Superiority does not come into the picture where religion is concerned..

Places of worship are sacred and all Malaysians should respect other people's religions.

5. Meritocracy in schools, colleges and universities. Principals and senior assistants in schools and vice-chancellors, professors and lecturers in universities should be recruited based on merit alone; not on race, not on colour.

Using this yardstick, we should review all positions in schools, colleges and universities so as to enhance the status of our educational system.

We know very well, though that we refuse to admit that our best university is not even among the Top 200 in Asia. We should aim for the Top 10. Our university standards are far below par. We should not be proud of our low standards.

Scholarships should be given to those excellent students based on results. Using extra-curricular activities as an additional qualification is very stupid. It is only done in Malaysia. Have you heard of Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard using this criterion for admission to their universities or for scholarships? What have these got to do with studies?

6. Sports. Look at the recent Olympics for example. How far have we gone in the Olympics? What about world football? We are nowhere to be seen. Probably in badminton and squash, we could claim some fame. Hockey? Table tennis? Basketball? Golf? Volleyball?

Yes, forget about going to London for our sports facilities at great expense. That idea was the most stupid I had ever heard. Millions of pounds have been lost and the project was rejected by the local council there.

7. Abolishing the ISA. It was originally used by the British in Malaysia against the communists. Now, it is abused to unfairly detain political opponents and now even against reporters, bloggers and people such as Hindraf leaders.

There are sufficient laws to punish real offenders. Using this law is tantamount to hitting below the belt, to put it mildly.

A total of 106 people were detained in Operation Lallang. Blame the police for those detentions? Who was responsible for the order to detain people? The ISA should be abolished to safeguard all Malaysians from being abused and tortured.

There are many other points which readers could add in for the prime minister to achieve before he steps down. These could be his legacies.

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