

**Bad blood in Bagan Pinang**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Oct 7, 2009**  
**Dean Johns**

Barisan Nasional's life-and death struggle to put an end to its run of by-election losses in Peninsular Malaysia appears to have brought out all its worst characteristics.

First and most bloody-minded of all was its selection of disgraced home-town hero Isa Samad as its candidate for the state seat.

As everybody recalls by now, thanks to the storm of protest since the announcement of his candidacy, Isa is a former menteri besar of Negeri Sembilan who was suspended from Umno for three years in 2004 for 'money politics'.

Though 'money politics' is Umno code for 'corruption', Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak defended BN's choice of Isa to run for the seat, saying that the candidate's offence was "only a technical matter and he has already paid for his deeds. In our system, even a criminal gets a second chance and can contest the post after serving his or her punishment."

What Najib typically failed to mention that Isa was conveniently never charged with the crime of corruption, and thus, like many other BN figures strongly suspected of criminal activities, has avoided any risk of receiving his proper punishment.

And Najib's forgiving attitude is in strange contrast with previous declarations by senior Umno figures like Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Dr Mahathir Mohamad himself that Isa is a 'tainted' figure.

But Mahathir is now apparently prepared to throw his principles out the window and lend his support to Isa, if only to pursue his opposition to PAS.

According to a *Bernama* report carried by *Malaysiakini*, he used the occasion of a lecture entitled *Dari Minda Tun, Ketuanan Melayu* (From Tun's Mind, Malay Supremacy) at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) in Dungun, Terengganu, to cast a litany of weird aspersions on the PAS leadership.

**Load of hogwash**

Some of these leaders, he said, were willing to declare as 'halal' what they used to say was 'haram' simply to please former enemies who had now become partners in the opposition's Pakatan Rakyat coalition.

"I think things will only get worse (if the opposition comes into power at the federal level. Their leaders are willing to make 'halal' everything."

He expanded on this diatribe by recalling how PAS leaders formerly held the view that cooperation with non-Muslims would make one an infidel.

"But now they are cooperating with non-Muslims, they are also saying that it is okay to rear pigs, only that Muslims should not consume pork. PAS quotes the Quran that pork is 'haram' but that it did not say pigs cannot be reared.

"Going by this, it means we (Muslims) can rear pigs, can sell pork but not eat it. Just because they want the cooperation of some people, they are willing to compromise on their

principles."

Having delivered himself of this load of hogwash, Mahathir further explained that Malaysia could ill-afford leaders who were inconsistent in their stand just for the sake of gaining popularity.

A remark that was in total conflict with Najib's excuse for BN's choice of the tainted Isa to contest in Bagan Pinang "because he is popular among the locals and is capable of winning".

But if all this wasn't enough to get honest Malaysians' blood boiling, then there's the fact that BN can count on thousands of postal votes from the three army camps and eight military units in the Bagan Pinang electorate.

While Barisan Nasional and its supporters claim that postal votes by armed-services personnel are secret and unsupervised, this seems quite incredible in the light of previous electoral figures.

And on top of this illegal and unconstitutional advantage, there's the BN practice of buying civilians' votes with the usual flurry of last-minute road-surfacing and other public works, plus personal 'gifts' and outright cash.

### **Caught red-handed**

Meanwhile, *Malaysiakini* reports that an unnamed source at a Chinese daily newspaper has revealed that the Home Ministry has issued a ban on press mention of Isa Samad's suspension from Umno for 'money politics' on the grounds that the suspension is widely known, Isa has already been punished, and thus "it would be best to let the voters decide for themselves".

And PKR Pantai Jerejak assemblyperson claims that *ChinaPress* has rejected a piece he submitted to it on the grounds that "no article on the by-election is allowed". So, thanks to BN and its blood-brothers in the military and the media, it looks pretty bleeding obvious that not much is being left to chance in Bagan Pinang.

As grim as the situation is, however, it does have its funny side. Umno supreme council member Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim alleged that he'd been punched by PAS supporters on nomination day, claiming he'd been hurt and later had to be hospitalised.

"After the Maghrib prayers, I felt like fainting," he said. "I threw up and passed out. I was in pain and my blood pressure shot up to 65/95. It was never that high before." For my part, I've never heard such a tall story before. As even a doctor as politically dodgy as Dr Mahathir would have to admit, a blood pressure of 65/95 makes no medical sense.

So we don't need Rahim to take a lie-detector test to tell us that he made the whole thing up. In any case, photos have emerged on *Malaysiakini* that PAS information chief Idris Ahmad says show that "Azeez was lying about the assault".

Pointing out that Azeez had passed through a PAS supporters' area despite police advice not to do so, Idris said that "as he was passing through, a PAS supporter tapped him on the shoulder, and did not punch him as claimed. The photo shows that Azeez just smiled and kept walking."

Idris reportedly called for Azeez to apologise to the people of Bagan Pinang and the entire

nation for telling a lie. But I'm not too sanguine about the chance of an apology.

Even when they're caught red-handed, or with blood pressures of 65/95, BN politicians seem happy to go on lying till they're blue in the face. So that only a bloody idiot would believe a word they said, let alone actually vote for them.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.

Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/114368>