

**Facing up to stark reality of NEP**  
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IF one good thing results from the Chinese Economic Congress held a day ago and attended by the country's top political and economic leaders, it would be that the open discourse that took place will force the Malays to confront the fact that the New Economic Policy does not protect or benefit them.

From the speeches made by top Chinese captains of industries on Saturday, especially those with a hot-line to the Umno elite, it is clear they are not bothered if the NEP stays. Although, of course, they were also quick to hedge their bets by pointing out that the New Economic Model, if it comes, may also bring along new opportunities.

kpg-baru-najibBut the bottom-line is just like the rich Umnoputras, they stand to gain enormous wealth – beyond the imagination of the ordinary Malaysian – if business continues to be conducted behind closed doors along the corridors of powers in Putrajaya.

It is the ordinary people, the Chinese, Indian, Kadazan-Dusun-Murut and especially the Malays – because they form the bulk of the population – who will suffer the most if the covers built through the years in the name of the NEP to hide corruption are not dismantled soon.

This is what the phrase the rich get richer and the poor get poorer means.

And this is the point that has been glaringly lacking or perhaps intentionally ignored by ultra-Malay rights groups like Perkasa and MPM.

That while the NEP was originally meant to help the poor regardless of ethnicity, it is the rich especially amongst the Malays and the Chinese who have benefited the most by far.

Yet the NEP's original benchmark was simple – to qualify for government aid, all you needed was to be poor. The poorer the easier. But now to secure big government contracts, you have to be Malay or have a Malay front-man, and the richer and more powerful you are, the easier it is to get the deal!

Is Ibrahim Ali, the Perkasa president poor? What about Perkasa patron Mahathir Mohamad? And Mahathir's well-known friends Halim Saad, Tajudin Ramli, Syed Mokhtar al-Bukhari, Vincent Tan, Francis Yeoh, Ananda Krishna, etc – are they poor?

If most of the rich prefer the NEP to stay - even when the son of its founder has called the current shape of the policy a bastardised version of the original - then who wants to see it go?

Well, the Pakatan Rakyat would. So too would foreign investors, Malaysians who have not been brainwashed by Umno, Perkasa or Mahathir, and also those in the BN government who would prefer to see the NEM implemented for reasons of their own.

"I have strong opinions about how the NEP has been bastardised over the years. At that time, no one knew what the outcome would be. It was a social engineering experiment that no one had ever done before in any country," said Nazir Razak, whose father Abdul Razak Hussein had introduced the NEP in 1971.

nazirrazak

Nazir

“So they gave it 20 years. And they felt that after 1969, they had to give it a try. But now it is so embedded in everything that we do - in every part of the government, in every part of businesses that it has become a problem.”

This what the CIMB CEO said during a question-and-answer session at the Chinese Economic Congress.

But sadly, pundits may be right in believing that despite Nazir's openness, the fact that his brother is Prime Minister Najib Razak and that both men think the time has come for the NEM, at the end of the day the brothers are out-powered by Perkasa's Ibrahim Ali and his patron Mahathir Mohamad.

All eyes are now on what outrageous reply Ibrahim Ali will make to Nazir. Tragically for Malaysia, its national and economic future may now be in Ibrahim's hands or rather in Mahathir's - not Nazir's or Najib's, going by the way the PM has chosen to talk his talk but not walk it. — Malaysia Chronicle

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