

Orang Asli Village Given RM134,529. Shahrizat Given RM250 million
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When his special team of advisers ran out of ideas and tacky slogans, Prime minister Najib Abdul Razak fell back on another source of inspiring soundbites; football.

Najib used the Liverpool Club rallying call "You'll never walk alone" to inspire his audience.

Funnily enough, his prison staff at the Kamunting Hilton uses the same corruption of the chant, heard in The Kop, "You'll never walk again!"

On a visit to SJK(T) Vivekananda, Najib addressed a 3,000 strong crowd and said that since he came to power in 2009, he had been responsible for several multi-million ringgit programmes for the Indian community whereby Tamil schools, temples, deserving students and "stateless" Indians, had all benefitted.

Everyone lapped-up his every word, especially his side-kicks, who were charmed by his talk. Naturally, Najib denied that his offers of help were mere election gimmicks.

All was well until Najib told the Indian community that he could not help them if he was on his own and that they had to "walk with him".

"I make this commitment (but) as your prime minister I cannot do this alone, I cannot walk this journey alone, I must walk with all of you to make this journey and to achieve what we set out do.

"If I have fulfilled the promise, if the government has fulfilled the promise, imagine what we can do with five more years for the Indian community."

One can't help feeling sorry for the PM. He is busy limiting the damage inflicted on BN.

Yesterday, the Umno secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor denied that Umno had "bought votes" during elections and said that the party did not need to resort to such measures. Tengky Adnan was responding to allegations by former information minister Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir that between RM200 and RM1,000 had been given to individual voters, in previous elections.

Perhaps Tengku Adnan needs reminding. When Isa Samad was nominated as the BN candidate for the Bagan Pinang state by-election, former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that Umno's image would be tarnished.

Mahathir said: "Isa has already been found guilty (of money politics). If Umno fields him, it means that Umno is not serious about such cases".

Even football has its foul ups and Najib was foolish to emulate these. Although GE-13 has yet to be called, Najib, the accomplished actor, has been busy making promises to all.

During a visit to Perak, Najib promised Perakians RM 36 million; RM2 million each to Masjid Changkat Cermin, SJK(C) Tit Bin and a hall for the Indian community. He set aside RM30 million for the Orang Asli.

"Because the Orang Asli community has been loyal to my government, I will not hesitate to approve this allocation."

When the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) government was briefly in power, an Orang Asli task force advised,

identified and preserved the ancestral land of 45,000 Orang Asli. When BN wrenched power from PR, this task force became obsolete.

Lawyer Augustine Anthony, the legal adviser for the Orang Asli Villages of Perak claimed that the Orang Asli community had been forced to relocate because of Felda and Felcra schemes.

In a Star report in 2009, he said, "In Perak, there are 223 Orang Asli villages and each one has a sad story to tell."

The report tells of the Orang Asli having no access to running water or electricity, and of land encroachment.

With 223 Orang Asli villages in Perak, Najib is only forking out RM 134,529 per village. This is a paltry sum compared to what the Women Family and Community Development Minister, Shahrizat Abdul Jalil managed to squeeze out of the government.

Both the Orang Asli and Indian communities do not need pre-election handouts. They need opportunities to make a useful contribution to the economy. They also need to be treated as Malaysians, not an after-thought.

Over the past one hundred years, the Orang Asli have been relocated at least three times, for commercial reasons; first for tin mining, then logging and now for oil palm cultivation. In the name of development, even their ancestral burial grounds were converted into oil palm estates.

Just like the Orang Asli, the Indians are a forgotten community. When the estates were disbanded, they were not properly housed nor their needs addressed.

Umno/BN did not walk the talk. Now that the rakyat has been energized by Bersih 2.0, the Hindraf movement and various BN scandals, Najib is forced to walk on eggshells.

Why should anyone believe him now? The rakyat are within their rights to tell him to "Take a hike!"

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(The views expressed above belongs to the author in its entirety and does not represent the opinion of Malaysian Mirror in any way)