

A Time For Self-reflection Among Political Aspirants
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 27 (Bernama) -- In recent weeks, the Malay proverb of "memikul biawak hidup" or "carrying a live monitor lizard" has gained prominence, especially in local political circles.

It all began when Datuk Syed Ali Alhabshee, the divisional head of UMNO Cheras, used the proverb to describe the difficulty being faced by UMNO on unanswered questions over the controversy surrounding the National Feedlot Corporation as its promoters are related to a national UMNO leader.

It is not difficult to fathom why Syed Ali had used that proverb because even in real life, it is not easy to carry a monitor lizard in view of the inherent danger that it brings.

Monitor lizards, when cornered, tend to bite and claw their way out of danger. Their mouths are said to harbour some kind of dangerous bacteria and humans have been known to have died from blood infections when they are not attended to in time.

With such inherent perils, who dares to carry a monitor lizard unless it is tied up or caged?

Hence, Syed Ali's concern is understandable as he wants UMNO to be free of encumbrances when it goes into battle for votes in the next general election.

He is concerned over some UMNO members whose affairs or actions could be a liability to the party.

And being a liability or being tainted is something that politicians will avoid at all costs in order to stay relevant or wanted.

For Barisan Nasional politicians, this is especially significant in light of what is being promoted by UMNO president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak -- having winnable candidates for the forthcoming general election.

Ever since the UMNO General Assembly about a month ago, the description of "winnable candidates" has gained currency and for many political aspirants, it is a time for self-reflection in the larger interests of the party.

Najib, in putting forth his thoughts on the characteristics of a winnable candidate to ensure better electoral results, has described such a person as being acceptable to the majority of voters in a constituency and also by the party machinery.

According to Syed Ali, politicians should realise that it is the voice of the people that will determine whether they rise or fall in the world of politics.

He had also used another Malay proverb -- "kerana nila setitik rosak susu sebelanga" to describe tainted politicians who may damage the party, which is akin to the English version

of "one rotten apple spoils the barrel".

As such, he reminded UMNO leaders and members of the pledge that they had made together with Deputy UMNO President and Deputy Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, at the close of the recent UMNO General Assembly in that they would place party interest above self-interest.

And perhaps politicians should also reflect upon another ancient proverb which says: "If you want to know your past, look into your present conditions. If you want to know your future, look into your present actions."

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