

Kit Siang blames Dr M, BN for Malaysia's growing racial chasms
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By Ida Lim

KUALA LUMPUR, June 10 — DAP's Lim Kit Siang today blamed the increasing racial polarisation in the country on the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition and former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Lim appeared to be responding in a tit-for-tat manner to Dr Mahathir's blog posting last Thursday, in which the former Umno president had accused DAP of causing the country's races to be driven even further apart.

"Dr Mahathir should instead point the finger at himself, at Umno and at the BN coalition for being the true culprits behind increasing racial polarization," the DAP parliamentary leader said in a statement today.

Lim then proceeded to say that Dr Mahathir had given his support to the leaders of Malay right-wing group Perkasa during the 13th general election, while slamming Umno-owned daily Utusan Malaysia and BN component party MCA for contributing to the racial divide.

"It was Dr Mahathir who worked behind the scenes as Perkasa advisor to all Perkasa leaders — Zulkifli Noordin and Ibrahim Ali — to run as de facto candidates in GE13.

"It was Utusan who played up racial sentiment to increase the fear among the Malays by creating lies and fiction about the DAP. It was MCA who published fear-mongering advertisements in the English and Chinese press and in the Chinese radio stations in order to increase racial polarization between the Chinese and the Muslims in Malaysia," Lim said.

"If there is one thing that I can agree with Dr Mahathir on is this statement that 'racial polarization has become more pronounced' and that 'it will become more so in the future'. The blame for this lies squarely on the shoulders of BN leaders including past leaders like Dr Mahathir," the Gelang Patah MP said, referring to Dr Mahathir's post on the chedet.cc blog.

Lim claimed that the "the only way" for Malaysians to move away from racial lines is to stop supporting BN, saying that Pakatan Rakyat's (PR) three parties — DAP, PAS, and PKR — are multiracial parties that had fielded candidates from different ethnic groups.

Lim moved to defend DAP from Dr Mahathir's attacks, with the latter having said that DAP is a Chinese party with a largely Chinese membership base and leadership.

He rebutted Dr Mahathir by saying that the DAP's leadership is multiracial, highlighting the fact that party members had consistently elected Indian and Malay leaders into its Central Executive Committee (CEC) in every party poll since it was formed in 1966.

"If Dr Mahathir had bothered to examine the current DAP leadership line-up on our website, he would see that we have Malay, Chinese, Indian, Iban and Kadazan members in our Central Executive Committee. Rather than pointing the finger at the DAP, Dr Mahathir should ask himself how many non-Malay leaders have been elected or appointed into the Umno Supreme Council to answer the question of who the real racists are," Lim said.

He also pointed out that DAP had fielded non-Chinese candidates in 11 general elections

since 1969 at both the parliament and state levels, with Malay candidates winning state seats in 1969, 1974, 1982, 1986 and 1990, as well as one federal seat in 1990.

Lim said DAP had even fielded seven Bumiputera parliamentary candidates in Sabah and Sarawak for the first time in the 13th general election, with the party sending six candidates from the Bumiputera community as compared to those from the Chinese community in Sarawak.

He said DAP now has two Malay MPs, one Malay state assemblymen and a Kadazan state representative for the first time, following the May 5 polls.

Lim further said that DAP has more elected representatives from the Indian community, with six MPs and 14 state assemblymen, than BN's Indian-based party MIC's four MPs and five state assemblymen.

The veteran leader said DAP had not only sent Chinese candidates in Chinese-majority seats as claimed by Dr Mahathir, before attacking Umno in return for allegedly only contesting in one Chinese-majority seat, Gelang Patah.

Lim said DAP placed eight Chinese candidates in non-Chinese majority federal seats and won seven of these, while also winning 10 out of the 12 non-Chinese majority state seats where it sent non-Chinese candidates.

He said the total of non-Chinese seats won by DAP was nine federal seats and 17 state seats, claiming that Umno had only won two federal seats and three state seats that were not Malay-majority areas.

After the May 5 election results, which Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak attributed to a "Chinese tsunami", Utusan Malaysia ran reports that appeared to blame the Chinese community for Barisan Nasional's (BN) historic losses in Election 2013.

BN had ceded an additional seven seats to PR when it won only 133 federal seats against the federal opposition's 89 seats.

On May 7, Utusan Malaysia carried the incendiary headline "Apa lagi Cina mahu?" (What more do the Chinese want?) and went on to defend it the next day with several reports justifying the headline.

Both Utusan Malaysia and Dr Mahathir had repeatedly targeted DAP, attacking it as a Chinese party.

Analysts and politicians across the political divide have said that the May 5 polls results reflected an urban-rural divide instead of a Malay-versus-Chinese vote.

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