

DAP pinpoints where BN has failed, says it's more interested in enriching elite
Malaysian Insider
Sept 15 , 2013
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As Malaysia celebrates the 50th anniversary of its formation, the government's failure to address four main issues is the reason the Merdeka promise of a prosperous and just country has not been realised, said Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng (pic).

"Malaysia has four main problems, crime, corruption, the rise of debt both at national and household level, and the decline of education standards, productivity and skills of the local workforce," Lim, the DAP secretary-general, said in a statement today.

"Those in power are not interested in resolving the four issues, they prefer to divert attention by raising extremists matters related to race and religion. Barisan Nasional has used these tactics successfully to deflect attention from their own failings."

But ignorance is not bliss, he pointed out, as this failure has led to Malaysia's credit outlook being reduced from stable to negative by Fitch Ratings, the first drop for Malaysia in the competitiveness rankings since 2006.

"The decline isn't only in the competitiveness rankings, the country's educational standards have also been reflected in the world rankings where Malaysian universities have slipped down the rung," Lim said, adding there were nearly 100,000 unemployed local university graduates.

"Not everyone is blinded by the country's economic progress, some people have not lost sight of the fact that Malaysia has performed relatively worse compared to countries like South Korea and Taiwan, who were poorer than us 50 years ago," Lim said.

"Beneath the thin veneer of success, the failures are clear for all to see as there is a wide disparity in the infrastructure development both between and within the urban-rural divide. Not to mention the income inequality, the social injustices, the lack of empowerment and human dignity."

Lim said BN was more interested in enriching the elite instead of wiping out absolute poverty in Sabah and Sarawak. The basic needs of water, roads, internet connectivity and electricity in the Borneo states have not been met.

On crime, Lim said it was not difficult for police to reduce the national index if BN allowed them to do their actual work instead of monitoring opposition leaders. He said only 10% of the 107,000-strong police force was involved in crime investigations.

"If the proportion was increased to 50 per cent of the police force, I am confident that police omnipresence would be able to reduce the crime index and deter criminals," he said, adding this was not something new as it had been mentioned numerous times.

Regarding national debt, Lim said BN claimed the country's debt was 54% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He pointed out that this did not include the guaranteed government debt which would increase the national debt to 70% of GDP.

"Moreover, if the 70% debt to GDP is high, the household debt is even higher at 83.5 per

cent of the GDP. This addiction to debt is symptomatic of the government's fiscal recklessness to borrow to spend its way out of our country's problems."

Instead of being reckless, BN should set an example to individual households by reducing its dependency on debt. Lim also criticised the government for failing to invest in quality education.

"Barisan Nasional is fixated on mediocrity instead of a culture of excellence, political quotas instead of performance, and empty talk instead of decisive action. With this mentality, Malaysia risks being left behind and unable to escape the middle-income trap."

The time has come to adopt policies which unite and respect the Malaysian people instead of dividing and denigrating them as second or third-class citizens on the pretext of attempting to create more millionaires, he added. – September 15, 2013.

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