

GE14 is really about the Malays, says Zaid Ibrahim
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Former minister turned vocal critic says the result will tell whether Malays favour the 'truth' or the 'better truth'.

KUALA LUMPUR: The 14th general election is, more than anything, about the Malays and their mindset, according to former de facto law minister Zaid Ibrahim.

He says in his latest blog post that the outcome of GE14 will tell how deeply Malays are entrenched in the feudal mentality of protecting their leaders at all costs.

Taking off from remarks by national laureate A Samad Said in Penang that Malays do not seem to see truth as "truth" that needs to be defended for its own sake, Zaid differentiates between "truth" and the "better" truth.

The latter, he says, is a "truth" that offers personal benefits, lamenting that a sizeable number of Malays are now favouring the "better" truth.

He says: "These Malays are willing to subordinate one set of truths for a better set of truths – 'better' for them, at least. Defending their political and religious leaders at all cost is the better truth. That's why they see this as part of their job, and it has nothing to do with the actual truth nor does it arise out of a sense of duty or honour. They do it for material reward."

The DAP member notes that this is reminiscent of the Malay feudal system of old where leaders always rewarded their loyalists generously.

"The growth of the class of 'hamba raja' (protectors of the ruler), well narrated by Munshi Abdullah in the earlier Malay kingdoms, has now spread far and wide. The 'hamba raja' are alive and well today, strengthened by the addition of non-Malay parties and recently by the entry of the ulama to their fold.

"This practice has been perfected by Datuk Seri Najib Razak who has capitalised on feudal community values as well as religious teachings that, sadly, our so-called 'progressive' education system has not been able to change or replace."

He says these "hamba raja" are rewarded for ganging up against critics and defending their leaders or authority.

And that is why, he claims, there are those who rush to the defence of their leaders even though they know the "facts" and "truth" about the issues concerned.

He charges that those defending Najib over the US Department of Justice's revelation that money siphoned from 1Malaysia Development Bhd had been used to buy assets and gifts by Jho Low and several others, have this mindset.

"It's not that they are unable to discern or don't know the 'facts' or 'truth' about any matter. They do. They certainly know how to read and comprehend the report but still, they defend the prime minister even at the cost of looking like fools."

Asking what this means for GE14, Zaid answers: "Quite simply, if we have more 'hamba raja' than good decent Malays, then the Barisan Nasional will win again. However, if there are now fewer 'hamba raja' in the peninsular states, then the opposition will have a good chance. In this sense, the coming general election is more about Malays than all other issues combined."

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