

## **The Malaysian dream of change, moderation and hope**

After nearly 4 years since the political tsunami of 8 March 2008, we now stand on the horizon of a General Election that is set to become the most critical General Election in the history of Malaysia.

For the first time, we will be contesting as part of a grand coalition called Pakatan Rakyat. For the first time, we will be contesting not merely to deny Barisan Nasional's two-thirds majority but to win power. For the first time, Malaysians will have an alternative that is united, viable and proven.

4 years ago, we were solemnly entrusted with an opportunity. In an unprecedented turn of events, Pakatan Rakyat won in five states, and DAP became partners in power in Penang, Selangor and Perak, although the latter was later lost due to a immoral coup de tat of the Barisan Nasional in 2009.

BN suffered historic losses because BN was an agent of corruption, abuse of power, cronyism and extremism. BN ran out of both ideas and ideals. Instead of repenting over its many broken promise BN became more arrogant. The people chose DAP and PR because we are seen as agents of change, moderation and hope. Most important we are clean.

DAP and PR has fulfilled the people's expectations of being an agent of change, moderation and hope. Despite our lack of experience we have inspired hope by proving that we can govern better than BN. Whether in Penang or Selangor, DAP and PR has performed in these 4 years better than BN for the last 51 years. We have made PR states cleaner, greener and safer and we shall make Malaysia cleaner, greener and safer.

We must fulfil the aspirations of Malaysians, especially the young, for change from a broken system of corruption and repressive laws that violates basic human rights. Malaysians wants leadership with integrity, a democratic people-centric government that listens to the people, does the people's work and gives hope to the people.

We have succeeded by practicing moderation and rejecting extremism, preaching fellowship and not hatred, respecting each other as Malaysians first and Malays, Chinese, Indians, Kadazans and Ibans second. Moderation is justice, freedom and truth combined. Moderation is our road to success

to realise our Malaysian dream of a clean and developed nation enjoyed by all.

In cleaning up Malaysia, we must never repeat the mistakes of BN. DAP's greatest asset are our integrity and incorruptibility. That is why DAP would punish any member leader involved in any illegal or corrupt acts. We propose 6 integrity measures:-

One, there must be a ban on political parties' involvement in business which can only lead to conflict of interest. How can politics mix with business as the former seeks to uphold public interests whereas the latter is to pursue private benefit and profit? How wealthy political parties that are involved in business have become can be seen by MCA giving money to its members every year.

Two, the ban on mixing politics with business must be followed by establishing an open tender system to check crony capitalism. An open tender system will avoid unjust contracts such as the Independent Power Producers and the toll concession operators allowing the few to earn tens of billions of ringgit in extraordinary profits at the expense of the 27 million ordinary citizens.

Malaysians mourn the "the lost decade of corruption", where the Washington-based financial watchdog Global Financial Integrity (GFI) estimated RM 1,077 billion of illicit money(including corruption money) had been illegally siphoned out of our country from 2000-9. The recent RM250 million "cows and condos" scandal where money was released 2 years before any agreement was signed to a family company of Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil for buying condos instead of cows shows the BN refuses to change.

No wonder in the latest Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perception Index, Malaysia dropped to 60th place in 2011 as compared to 37th in 2003 when Tun Abdullah Ahmad first took over as Prime Minister. In contrast Penang was praised by TI for implementing open tenders.

Third, the Freedom of Information Act to ensure transparency and also public disclosure of government contracts.

Fourthly, there must be a declaration of personal assets by public officials holding positions of public trust.

Fifth, there must be full and unconditional implementation of the 125 recommendations proposed by the 2005 Royal Commission on the Enhancement of the Management and Operation of PDRM, especially the formation of the Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC). The IPCMC was intended to cut down abuses of police powers and police corruption. Failure to set up the IPCMC only shows the unwillingness of the BN government to deal with the negative public perception about the police.

Finally, the Elections Commission (EC) must be punished for failure to act or even failure to press for action by the relevant authorities on election bribery, especially failure to comply with the Election Offences Act 1954 imposing election spending limits of RM200,000 for every Parliamentary constituency and RM100,000 for every state constituency.

### **To Realise The Malaysian Dream Of A Developed Nation We Must Reject A “Police State” In Favour Of A Policy State That Focuses On Improving The Quality Of Life And Reducing The Cost Of Living Of Ordinary Rakyat**

To realise the Malaysian Dream of a developed nation we must reject a “police state” in favour of a “policy state” that focuses on improving the quality of life and reducing the cost of living of ordinary rakyat. Policies must be made to benefit the people and not to turn Malaysia into a police state.

Why should BN spend so much time and effort to justify why the Bersih rally has to be banned, peaceful assemblies are not allowed near petrol stations, places of religious worship and public places that in effect bans peaceful assemblies? Should not time and effort be spent on the managing the rising cost of living and poorer quality of life?

The price of meat, vegetables and fish has gone up over the past year. Milk powder for babies have risen by nearly 50%. But other basic commodities have gone up such as.

1. Sugar – RM1.45/kg (Jan 2010) to RM2.30 (May 2011) – 58% in 18 months
2. Telur: B grade RM9/30eggs (sept 2010) RM10/30eggs (now)

3. Electricity tariff – average increase of 7.12% in June 2011.
4. Teh tarik and kopi susu – increase RM0.10 to RM0.20 (9.1% to 18.2%).
5. Gardenia bread – 5%-14% hike (2011)
6. Service tax increase 1% – additional RM720 million in taxes to Federal Government
7. Onions – price up 17% (Dec 2010)
8. Milo prices – up 5% 1st half 2011; 4% 2nd half 2011
9. Nescafe price went up further 6% in 2nd half 2011 – when price is already >RM20 per 300gm.
10. All your favourite food whether roti canai, char koay teow and nasi kandar is smaller even though at the same price.

When the Penang state government implemented our “Golden Child” programme giving RM200 for every child born to Penangites since 1.1.2011, parents tell me that the RM200 can only last 3 months for buying milk as compared to 5 months in 2010. This is borne out by the inflation rate rising by 3.2% for Jan-Nov 2011 as compared to 2010. The inflation rate rose by only 0.6% in 2009 and 1.7% in 2010. Over 2011(November) food prices increased 4.7%, Transport 4.6%, Restaurant & Hotels 5.8%, Alcohol & Tobacco 5%.

Rising inflation is a serious problem because of high levels of household debt. The bottom 60% of our population have an average household income of less than RM3,000 a month, while the bottom 40% live on less than RM1,500 a month. More worryingly, Bank Negara’s Annual Report 2010 revealed that Malaysia’s household debt at the end of 2010 was RM 581 billion or 76 per cent of GDP, thus giving us the dubious honour of having the second-highest level of household debt in Asia, after South Korea.

In addition, the Malaysian household debt service ratio stood at 47.8 per cent in 2010, meaning that nearly half of the average family’s income goes to repaying debts. As a rule, banks would not lend money to those whose total servicing of loans exceeded one third of their income. In other words, we are spiralling into an indebted nation.

There does not seem to be a way out as income has also stagnated in the last 10 years. This has resulted in a dire situation whereby the bottom 40 per cent of our population earns only 14.3 per cent of the total income while the top 20 per cent shares 50 per cent of the total income.

To make matters worse, federal debt has now touched RM456 billion as at the end of last year while our debt-to-GDP (Gross Domestic Product) ratio has nearly reached the national debt ceiling of 55%. In contrast Penang reduced our debt by 95% or RM600 million from RM630 million in 8.3.2008 to RM30 million by end October 2011, the largest debt reduction amongst Malaysian states in history.

It is therefore time to introduce the concept of economic solidarity. By this we mean solidarity between the rich and the poor, between the urban and the rural, between the strong and the weak. Ultimately, our aim must be to build a society that empowers its people, especially the bottom 60% that really need it. More than anything, we need to ensure economic survival and create economic solidarity through:

1. Implementing minimum wage.
2. Indexing minimum wage to the rate of inflation.
3. Fostering female participation in the work force.
4. Reducing reliance on unskilled foreign labour.
5. Moving up the value chain in automation and technology.
6. Addressing corruption and leakages through the CAT (Competency, Accountability, Transparency) Governance model.
7. Observing rule of law and
8. Upholding the freedom of workers to protect their legitimate rights.

We also need to address the weaknesses inherent in the current system that is characterised by corruption, crony capitalism and monopolies. As the situation stands, Malaysia is the only rice-producing country that has privatised rice production and worse, consolidated it into a monopoly under a single crony capitalist company. As a result, while Thailand and Indonesia are self-sufficient, we are dependent on imported rice for one third of our consumption. And because of the monopoly, we are paying more for imported rice than even Singapore.

Another example of crony capitalism is the gas subsidies of RM20 billion given to Independent Power Producers and lop-sided highway toll concession agreements which allow toll operators to increase their toll periodically over extended concession periods, despite the fact that most of them have already recouped vast profits far surpassing their investment outlays.

Until 31.12.2010, the toll operator for North-South Expressway (NSE) spent RM 5,945 million to construct the NSE but has received RM 24,266 million in toll receipts and government compensation. In other words the NSE toll operator has recorded a surplus of RM 18,321 million as at 31.12.2010 over its investment outlay.

Is there any need for the NSE toll operator to collect any more tolls from the public much less increase toll fares? By right and in the rakyat's interest, toll collection in the NSE should be stopped immediately in view that the revenue returns are 3 times more than the original investment. The situation is similar for Penang Bridge which has collected RM 1,859 million but spent RM 944 million on construction cost, enjoying a surplus of RM 924 million.

It is time that we replace this crony capitalistic economy with a "People's Economy" that will focus on increasing disposable income and improving the basic foundations of skills, technology and productivity.

## **Economic Prosperity**

More than forty years ago, Malaysia's GDP per capita was USD350 while South Korea trailed at USD130. Today, South Korea's GDP per capita stands at around USD20,000 while we are languishing behind at around USD7,000. Forty years ago, the average Malaysian was three times richer than the average South Korean. Today, they are three times richer than us.

This has happened because human talent was not valued and maximised, freedom of opportunity was not encouraged and a system was fostered that rewards know-who rather than know-how. Merit and excellence became secondary to political connections.

Hence, we now need to rebuild our economy to achieve prosperity based on innovation and the ability to create and adapt to new and relevant ecosystems. For example, today is the age of the information superhighway.

In order for us to prosper we will need to build internet-related industries and skills that are relevant to these industries.

We also need to build a new generation of entrepreneurs imbued with energy and expertise. However, entrepreneurship must necessarily be driven by the innovation, creativity and drive of the private sector. In this regard, we believe that the business of government is to get out of business.

The Government's role in cultivating economic prosperity is to invest in the future by concentrating on its social functions. Focus should be given to the areas of infrastructure, housing, education, transportation and healthcare, whereby a strong government role will ultimately result in improving the economic well-being of the people. For example, better public transportation will reduce the necessity to buy cars and thus immediately increase disposable income in place of car loans. The same applies with government intervention in affordable housing, education subsidies and healthcare.

In Penang, we have embarked on a series of social programmes that have lessened the burdens of the people. We give RM100 a year to senior citizens, the disabled and single mothers, in addition to a RM1,000 one-off payment to their heirs if they pass away. We also give RM1,000 one-off to students who are accepted into public universities and RM200 for every baby born in Penang. To help the people cope with the high cost of bringing up children, we also give RM100 to every student entering Standard 1 and 4 and Form 1 and 4.

Besides hand-outs to target groups, we have also established the CAT Dialysis Centre in Balik Pulau that provides subsidised dialysis treatment. In addition to that, we also provide free buses for in the inner city of George Town as well as for commuters from Seberang Jaya to Bayan Lepas. More significantly, we have also managed to abolish hardcore poverty a year after taking over. Now, we are aiming to eliminate poverty altogether by 2015. If we can do this in Penang, we can do this for the rest of Malaysia.

### **3 Core Voter Groups To Win The 13th General Elections**

To do what we have done in the states for the rest of Malaysia, we must convince the people to place their faith and trust once again on the DAP and Pakatan Rakyat. Three groups of voters will decide the next general

elections – namely phantom voters, East Malaysian voters and the youth. If we do not deal with phantom voters by ensuring clean elections, we will have lost even before we contest.

For Sabah and Sarawak we can not win only 2 out of 56 parliamentary seats as in 2008 elections. This is too big a handicap to give to BN. We need to win at least 1/3 or 18 parliamentary seats. DAP can help by winning a bulk of the 18 seats. As we are stronger in Sarawak than Sabah, Sarawak DAP shall be the fire engine room towards Putrajaya for the next general elections. Even though Johor is one of the front-line states, Sarawak can make Ubah Malaysia happen.

Sarawak DAP has accepted this challenge thrown by me to lead the charge as the Putrajaya fire engine room from East Malaysia. Sarawak DAP Chairman Sdr Wong Ho Leng will present a special report on how to help PR achieve winning 18 seats at the next general elections.

According to official statistics, 72% or three quarters of Malaysians are below the age of 40. Coupled with the fact that there will be a record number of first-time voters in the coming General Election, estimated to be about 2 million, we must appeal to the youth who make up the bulk of the two million new voters.

We must also empower women. PR offers women a vision of respecting their dignity and worth unlike that of Sharizat who will roll up her sleeves to defend her family company in the cows and condos scandal but not the Penan women who were raped.

## **BUILDING INSTITUTIONS TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE**

We offer the Malaysian Dream. The Malaysian Dream of a country that is truly Malaysian, where we can share in our country's wealth, enjoy equal opportunities to prosper, be rewarded for hard work, and where economic prosperity and human dignity is assured. In this Malaysian dream, we must build the following 5 institutions.

One, we are Malaysian First. This is the substantial dispute between DAP and the racist BN. Despite that the BN-controlled media continues to paint us as racists. Recently, I won a libel suit against UMNO's official mouthpiece, Utusan Malaysia for RM200,000 after they lied that I am anti-Malay. We must fight lies with facts and let our record prove that we treat



every Malaysian whether Chinese, Indian Malays, Kadazans and Ibans as brothers and sisters.

Two, Malaysians deserve to enjoy basic human rights and a civil society. We support the Federal Constitution where Islam is the religion of the Federation and the special position of the Malays as well as freedom of religious worship and protecting the legitimate rights of the non-Malays. In Penang we increased the allocation for Islamic affairs from RM12.5 million under BN to RM 63 million and established the EXCO portfolio of non-Islamic affairs.

Three, there must be equality of opportunity for all where what you know is more important than who you know. We fervently believe that every Malaysian is competent and that the colour of your skin does not make one inferior or incapable.

Four, there must be rule of law where institutions and not leaders protect the people. Five, we must build integrity and intelligent city communities towards a high-income and knowledge-based economy.

In building these institutions we must be free from fear. Thomas Jefferson once said, that when the people fear the government, there is tyranny. When the government fears the people, there is liberty. A government must show our respect for the people by trusting and having faith in their wisdom and intelligence.

## **Conclusion**

Saudara-saudari sekalian,

Before I conclude I would like to explain the necessity to amend the party constitution by extending another 6 months to enable us to hold our Party National Congress in December instead of August this year. The Selangor Menteri Besar has reaffirmed his commitment to hold Selangor state elections after June or July this year.

It is our duty and priority to focus on retaining and winning Selangor for PR. As this amendment would mean only a difference of four months, the CEC has unanimously proposed adopted this proposal to hold the Party National Congress in December 2012 so that the party will not be distracted from fighting the battle in Selangor that PR can not afford to lose.

I would also wish reassert our party's firm commitment and solidarity with Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim as leader of Pakatan Rakyat and Opposition Leader. We stand behind him as our alternative Prime Minister and whatever the outcome of his trial tomorrow, we will continue to support him. The focus is not about Anwar Ibrahim but about how to win the next general elections. We wish him good luck tomorrow and may he dream the Malaysian dream with us.

Four years ago, we were entrusted with an opportunity to prove that we can institute change. We have shown that with a clear agenda of economic solidarity and democracy, we can make a difference. Now, we seek to bring this agenda to the national level.

Our party has persevered for 46 years for this very moment. Let us now stand together, united in diversity and committed to our ideals. In that respect, it is imperative that we focus not only on strengthening our organisation, aggressive fund-raising to fulfil electoral targets and comprehensive dissemination of information, but also forge an unbreakable bond of party unity.

For the past 46 years DAP have chosen a most difficult path to make our dream a free, just and democratic Malaysia come true. The sacrifices of our leaders are consistent with our character and courage as a party. We thank those leaders who have paid the price.

We guarantee Malaysians one path we shall never choose, and that is the path of selling out or submission to BN. In our quest for the Malaysian dream we do not seek the victory of might but the vindication of right.

***Let us dare to dream the Malaysian Dream!***