POST - GE14 Malaysia & Indian Concerns in Malaysia:

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Introduction

- Thank you for this opportunity to visit JNU & share reflections

OUTLINE

Introduction

- Malaysia & Indians
- GE 14 & outcomes
- Challenges
- Malaysia – which way

Conclusion

MALAYSIA: Location

This edited volume on Contemporary Malaysian Indiansrepresents a collection of twenty-nine papers presented at three workshops held in 2014 in the National University of Malaysia in Bangi.It briefly traces the early history of Indian migration and settlement in British Malaya (later Malaysia) and the problems and challenges faced largely by the plantion workers who were compelled to adjust to the changing structural character of the Malaysian political economy in the decades after independence in 1957. With little or no preparation for urban living, their rather involuntary migration to the urban centres resulting from the fragmentation of estates compounded their problems of economic survival resulting from displacement and marginalization, let alone socio-economic advancement in a multi-ethnic setting. Consequently, the increase in awareness by Government and Civil Society of the multi-dimensional problems and challenges associated with urban poverty has compelled a review of policies and strategies to address this phenomenon of the marginalisation of the Indian poor. This volume therefore addresses these issues from both an academic as well as policy-oriented perspective. The primary focus in all these studies is on the problem of the bottom 40 percent of Malaysian society in which a sizable portion of Indians are trapped. The convergence of views by the various authors in this study indicates that while genuine efforts are being made by the Government and Civil Socity Society to alleviate the socio-economic condition of the Indian poor, the magnitude of the problem suggests that major policy reforms based on affirmative action anchored in a needs-based approach, rather than a race-based formula, would more effectively target the issue of urban poverty and socio-economic marginalization. This work which reflects the integration of research and advocacy in addressing the current problems and challenges of Malaysian Indians, underscores the basic philosophy of the Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA) in terms of its role and contribution as a university-based research centre towards the promotion of inter-ethnic relations and the holisitic and inclusive development of Malaysian society.

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Contemporary Malaysian Indians

History, Issues, Challenges & Prospects

KITA | Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia The National University of Malaysia

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MALAYSIA

- MULTI ETHNIC- Malays, Chinese, Indians & natives
- MULTI RELIGIOUS- Muslim, Buddhist, Hindus, Christians, Sikhs
- MULTI LINGUAL- Malaya, English, Tamil, Mandarin
- MULTI CULTURAL

POPULATION

- Based on the 2010 Census Report, there are 1.9 million Malaysian Indians out of a population of 28.3 million. About 8%
- A majority or about 80% of the 1.9 million can trace their origin to Tamil Nadu.

POPULATION

- While the remaining 20% comprises Malaysian Indians who might have a Malayali, Telugu, Punjabi, north Indian origin such as Gujarati or from another South Asian country like Sri Lanka as there is also a small Jaffna Tamil community in Malaysia.

Population

Of the 1.9 million Malaysian Indians, about 95% are residing in 38 districts (out of 150 districts) in 9 states (13 states & Federal Territory) in Peninsular Malaysia (Selangor, KL, Johore, Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Kedah, Penang, Malacca & Pahang).

Tamils in Malaysia

- A sizable section of Tamils are former rubber plantation workers who are now displaced and living in high rise-low cost flats in urban locations

Urban Flats

Post GE14 - Malaysia

- New Government at Putrajaya with PH securing 113 (PKR-47, DAP 42, Bersatu 13, Amanah 11)
- PH very multi racial with Malays, Chinese, Indians, Sabah & Sarawak representatives.
- However PH has no parliamentary representatives from Kelantan & Terengganu
- UMNO secured 47 parliamentary seats in Peninsular Malaysia in Malay majority seats out of the 79 seats won by BN
- BN weak performing – MCA, MIC, Gerakan & PPP (under representation)
- Rise of the Green Wave – PAS with 18 seats and two state governments (Kelantan & Terengganu) & sizable state seats in Kedah
- Political implications of GE14 on race relations & inter-religious harmony in Malaysia
- Post GE14 Parliament (16 July 2018) – Opposition is dominated by Malay- Muslim political parties

INDIANS IN GE14

Parliamentary Constituencies

- 64 parliamentary out of 222 parliament has 9% & more Indian voters or 5,000 & more Indian voters.
- Above 20,000 : 7
- 15,000 – 19, 000:10
- 11,000-14,000: 24
- 5,000 – 10,000: 23

- Biggest parliament : P111 Kota Raja 41,249 or 27.68% won by YB Mat Sabu, who is Defence Minister & President of Amnah

Candidates for parliament

49 Malaysian Indians contested in GE14

- PH – 15 (6+1 PKR & 8 DAP)
- BN – 12 (MIC, PPP & Gerakan)
- Others 12 – PAS 3, PSM 3, PRM 2, PAP 1 & Independent 3

Elected MPs

16 Malaysian Indians elected in GE14

- PH 14 (DAP 7, PKR 7). Youngest MP – Batu: 22 years old law student
- BN MIC – 2 (but one disqualified by Court action & by election in 2019)

IMPLICATIONS

- Indians voted for multi racial parties such as PKR & DAP
- No national Indian leader – public figure of the community
- PH seeking none racial approach but Malays & Chinese well represented in PH leadership
- PH great allocation of full Ministers position 4 + 1 (5)

REALITY IN PH

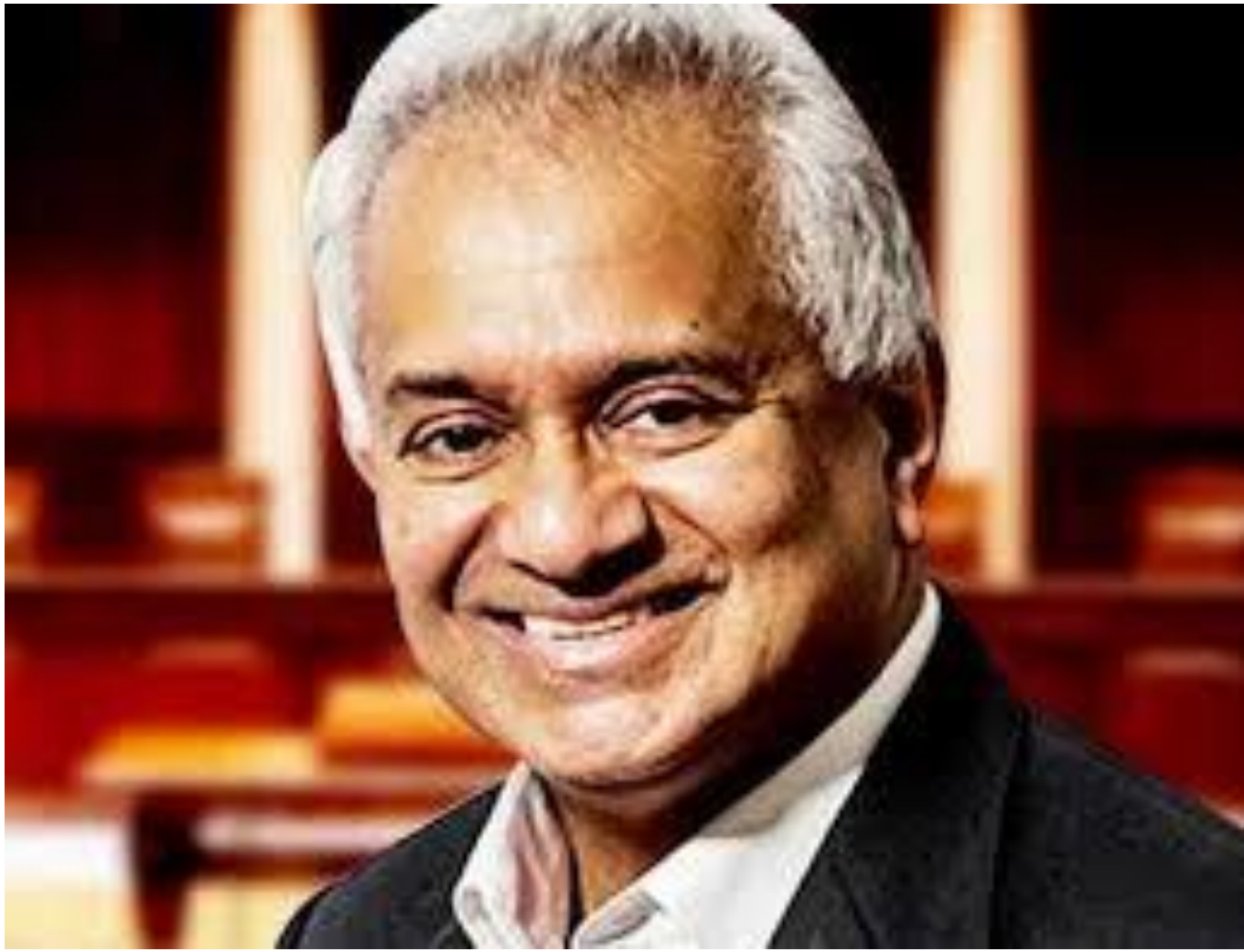
- Race & Religion will continue to be significant because of Berstau (Malays) & Ammnah (Muslim) parties with PKR (Majority Malay & with Indians & Chinese & DAP (Majority Chinese with Indians & Malays)
- PH will be more moderate than BN-UMNO approach

Ministers - YB Kula (Labor) & YB Gobind (Information)

Ministers - YB Dr Xavier (Water & land) & YB Senator Waytha Moorthy (Unity & Wellbeing)

Deputy Minister YB Siva Rasa- Rural Development)

& Attorney General Mr Tommy Thomas



CHALLENGES

- Freedom of Religion issues - handling of Zaikir Naik issues by PH not very good for moderate Islam
- Freedom of Religion – temple demolition: Seafield Sri Maha Mariamman temple (Nov 26)- riots, arrest & settlement.

OVERALL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

- National development planning & thrust on inclusive development?
- Mid Term Review of 11 Malaysia Plan (Oct 18, 2018). Reference to Indians very minor. Ignored the Malaysian Indian blueprint document & comprehensive.
- Indicated needs base but thrust seems to be majority race focus in terms of allocations

SEDIC

- The Socio Economic Development of the Indian Community Unit (Sedic) has been transferred from the Prime Minister's Department to the Unity and Social Well-Being Department under minister P Waythamoorthy
- New team at SEDIC and reorganising BUT little disclosure due to changes
- PH Indian MPs don't seen so united due to political difference & personalities

Ratification of ICERD – CSO/NGOs meeting YB Wayathamoorthy (Dec 14, 2018

- PH manifesto adopting a human rights approach
- Ratification of major UN Conventions
- Announced the ICERD
- Minister for National Unity took the lead
- Did not receive support for PH parties
- Ratification withdrawn

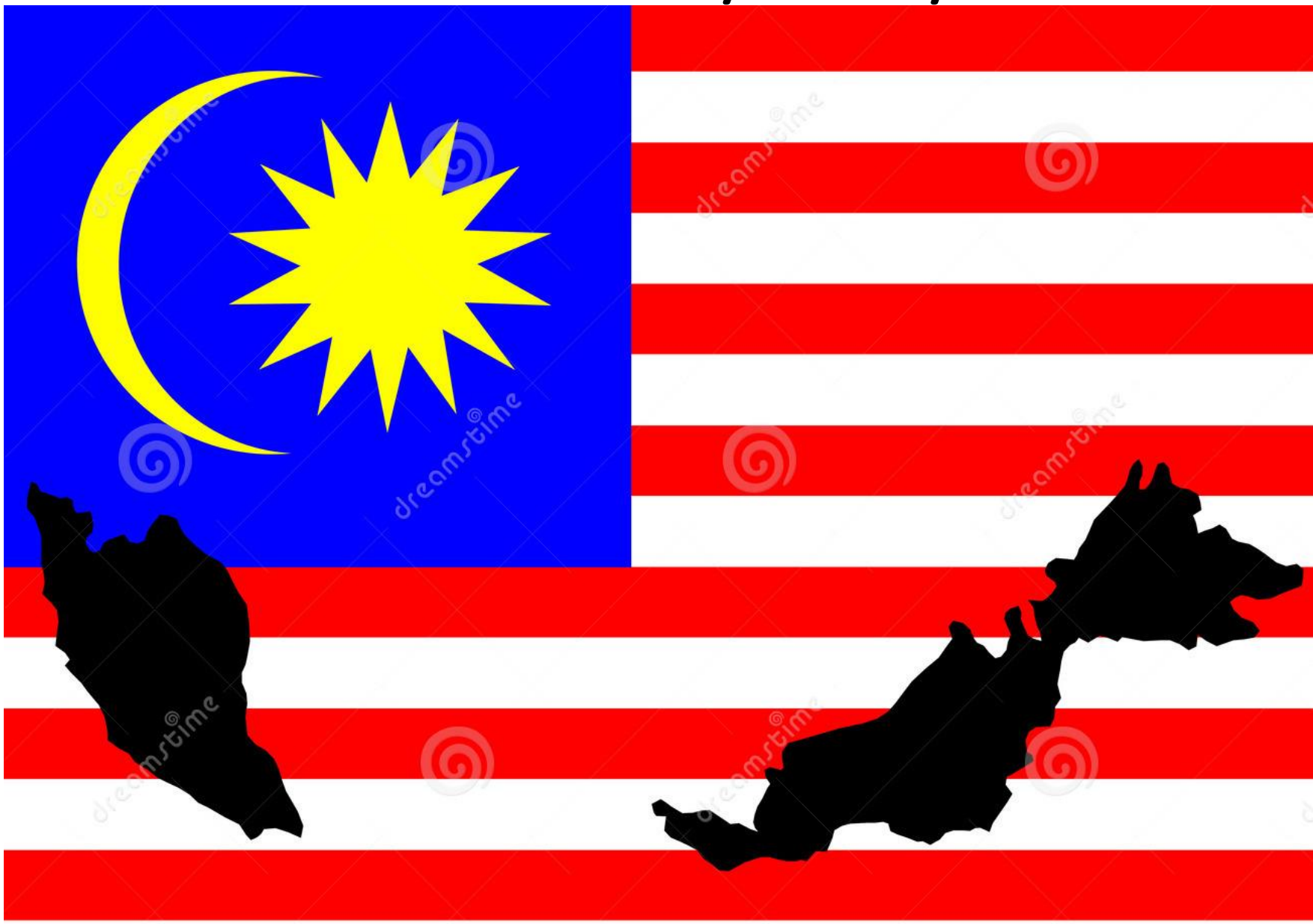
Dec 8, 2018 Anti ICERD Rally

Implications

- Political mobilization- race & religion
- 55,000 to 80,000 people walked the streets of KL
- Democratic freedom
- Re enforcing the Malay agenda by Opposition political parties
- Insecurity of Malays towards PH reform especially equality

Which way Malaysia?

- Real contestation is a political one
- Contestation of aspirations & visions as reflected in GE14.
- Majority – minority issues
- Malaysia very diverse- ethnicity & religion – not just 3 communities but must take the natives of Sabah & Sarawak too including the Orang Asli



Viewing Identity.

- Singular Vs Multiple identities.

- ‘We cannot see ourselves & people only from the lens of ethnicity; other identities are equally important dimensions of life & existence’.

- Ethnicity & sub ethnicity
- Nationality
- Gender
- Class
- Religion
- Culture
- Language

State & Nation:

State & nation used as common term but there is a difference. (KK Ghani)

State: 4 elements

- population,
- territory,
- government
- & sovereignty

Malaysia state formed in 1957 & May 9, 2018 a new Malaysia BUT State too has many issues such as Sabah & Sarawak issues

Nation

- Nation is a group of people who have a strong sense of unity & common consciousness.
- United unit of population- emotional, spiritual, psychological bonds
- No fixed territory but common bond like Jews in exile only in 1948 establishment of the State of Israel.
- Malaysia for nation building many different aspirations & visions.

AN ISLAMIC MALAYSIA

- PAS has advocated an Islamic Malaysia with Syariah at the heart of judicial system
- Based on the FC Article 3
- PAS secured 18% of the popular vote. Don’t underestimate this wave which might pick up over the next 10 years
- Non Muslims have a place but under Islamic society & order.
- Need to article the position of Islam from the understanding of the Federal Constitution, role of the Rulers and State governments
- We must accept and practice moderation

A SECULAR MALAYSIA

- Malaysia a secular nation as per the Federal Constitution
- Due to Article 3 & Article 11
- Article 8 on Equality of all
- Strong commitment to Human Rights & freedoms for all

A MALAY MALAYSIA

- The thrust is on the Ketuanan Melayu & race-ethnicity central to history & governance
- Non Malays have a place but alongside the dominant Malay race
- All key government appointments & positions to be held by Malays
- Certain institutions such as BTN indoctrinated all
- Use of repressive laws & enforcement agencies over the 60 of BN rule.
- Race will be a key factor but we must be fair to all as per the FC

A MALAYSIAN MALAYSIA

- A new VISION of Malaysia
- Instituting a multi cultural society as per the Federal Constitution
- Captured the imagination of all the peoples of Malaysia
- Captured the middle ground of Alliance and early BN
- All as equal partners, equal citizens
- Holding a balance of Article 8 & 153
- Good governance
- Consultative leadership
- Openness & Democratic space
- Constitutional Monarchy

CONCLUSION - FIVE THOUGHTS

- For Malaysian Indians who are ethnic minorities BEST to work from a multi racial & multi religious platforms with other ethnic & religious organisations & groups.
- Building on a human rights approach to development for all is the best approach for religious freedom & enhancing rights as citizens with responsibilities
- Enhancing socio-economic development via Sustainable development goals: “leaving no one behind”
- Active political participation & capability building in democratic governance is essential.
- Strengthening historical roots and cultural identifies is a must within Malaysia and diaspora is necessary.