

Why is he smiling at a laptop?

Written by straits-mongrel

Monday, 24 May 2010 15:08 - Last Updated Monday, 24 May 2010 15:42



SABM core group member Haris Ibrahim has this message for all who have temporarily left our shores: People, we'll fix this place right for you to come Home.

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Yesterday, more than 50 Malaysians met up in Sydney, Australia and engaged in a teleconference with the human rights activist-blogger on Skype. We will post their account of the fund-raising dinner on this website in the near future.

The impact? Here's a response from SK via email:

Dear all,

Last night must have been an epiphany moment for many amongst the gathering of well over 50 people. Hopes are rekindled, possibilities suddenly seem not so far fetched!

When I left Malaysia with my family in 1988, it was out of utter disillusionment and a sense of

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hopelessness. We thought we would never return to live in Malaysia again.

As a Chinese Malaysian, I always have this love/hate relationship with the country. Being born in Malaysia, there is something terribly romantic and nostalgic about the place which is "tanah tumpah nya darah ku" (my eyes would well up, like now, just thinking of the line from "Negara Ku" as when I first learnt it as a child). I so want to belong, to be patriotic - but the country did not want me and my kind; still doesn't, well to a certain extent.

With many emigrants, there is the dilemma of being rootless in a foreign country, however comfortable life may be; but for every self-respecting individual, to be treated as second class citizen in one's own country stirs up raw and confronting emotions.

After Sept 11, I **had** to take up Australian citizenship - believing that should I be caught in the midst of terrorist attacks in the course of my frequent work travels, I would have no protection from the Malaysian govt (more so as a Chinese resident overseas), but the Australian government always looks after its citizens.

But now, I lament losing my right to vote for change in Malaysia.

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For two decades, I shut my door to Malaysian politics. What I do not know will not hurt me. But thanks to John, Hse & Queenie, that door has now been partially opened, tentative though it may be.

Haris and RPK's address last night have helped to shine a torch through that door.

Mine is just the simple story of one person who would still like to call Malaysia home - imagine the hundreds of thousands of far more interesting stories all over the world waiting to be told!

Here is to one voice, one M'sia,

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SK

We thank you, SK.