



NEW DYNAMICS IN MALAYSIAN POLITICS SEMINAR SERIES

Politics at the Periphery: Explaining the Ruling Party's Continued Dominance in Sarawak

Date: Friday, 19 February 2010
Time: 10.30 am – 12.00 noon
Venue: Seminar Room II, ISEAS

About the Speaker

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Dr Faisal S Hazis is the Head of the Department of Politics and International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. He recently completed his PhD entitled "Strongmen-Politicians and Strategies of Domination: Politics among the Muslim Bumiputera in Sarawak, 1970-2006". Apart from Sarawak politics, he also conducts research on rural informatics, state-society relations and voting behaviour.

About the Seminar

Arising from the *reformasi* movement in 1998, new politics has gradually made an impact on Malaysian politics, resulting in the emergence of new actors, new voting trend, new discourse and new electoral demand. Although new politics became dormant in 2004, it re-emerged in a more vibrant fashion four years later, at the expense of the ruling party that lost its two-third parliamentary majority for the first time since 1969. This new political culture, however, has not gained much currency among Sarawak's multi-ethnic electorate as evident from the ruling party's continued dominance in the 2008 elections when it retained 31 out of 32 parliamentary seats in the state. Clearly, old politics which refers to communal politics, neo-feudalism, regionalism and the politics of development remains a salient feature of Sarawak politics. Still, glimpses of new politics can be observed in Sarawak. It promises to bring a new dynamic to state politics. Trying to take advantage of this scenario is the de facto opposition leader, Anwar Ibrahim, who publicly declared that Sarawak will be their road to Putrajaya, paving the way for an interesting battle in the coming state election, due by 2011. It is argued that the ruling party's dominance over Sarawak's electorate will remain intact for at least another decade but other internal and external forces might change this equilibrium, allowing new politics to flourish.

ISEAS is pleased to invite you to the Seminar.