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It could not have been politics

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YOU wish you can be sad. Instead you are angry. You wish you can find someone to blame. Instead you find only yourself to blame.

You wish you can share the sadness so many people profess to feel. You can. But only in as far as telling yourself that you should not have been such a big fool.

You wish you can be like them - shut yourself from reality and support the one you love no matter who and what he is.

You wish you were younger, foolish and believe easily in slogans and impassioned plea for justice. You wish you can feed as easily on "reformasi" as you do with your morning glass of teh tarik.

Idealism is a powerful mover. It destroys as fast as it builds. And it was idealism that brought a handful of us in the media in 1982 to believe that the winds of change was blowing and the new season was about to begin.

It started in March of that year when the Prime Minister of 10 months, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, introduced the less-than-impressive looking 35-year-old "Saudara" Anwar Ibrahim to the Press.

As it turned out, even before the news of his entry into Umno hit the street, the Prime Minister had already been made to defend his decision. He was subjected to some serious media questioning as to why he was bringing the student rebel into Umno.

He was asked to prove that Anwar had been an "unofficial" member of the party and why the announcement was made at the Prime Minister's Department and not at the Umno headquarters like other party-related events.

Thus began 16 years of a unique political partnership in the history of the country between two men of different political outlook and generations. It was to become a source of fascination to many, envy to some and a nagging fear to others. They thought the relationship was too good to last.

The older man had literally laid out the red carpet for his young protege, protecting and defending him. The media was automatically drawn into it.

Anwar was, until a few months ago, the favoured political son, the successor and the torch-bearer of the new millennium.

The Renaissance Man - loved by the traditionists for his apparent piety, by the masses for his easy-going manner and by the West for his liberalism.