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Do the honourable thing, Alagendra

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THE complexities in life have never been easy to come to terms with, or even get accustomed to especially when it involves a loved one or something you have given your whole life to. Giving up something you love or hurting someone dear, because there is a need to, has never been easy.

But life's ironies, as cruel as they may sometimes appear, will at some point or another in our lives thrust us in that uncompromising corner when we will have to make that great human effort that demands an unpopular decision.

Malaysian Hockey Federation deputy president, Tan Sri P. Alagendra is at that point now, propelled into that conflicting position - by both circumstances and his promise - where he will be at odds with having to defend his honour and giving up something that has been a great part of his life.

Late last year, when the media - namely Timesport and Mailsport - led a full-blooded campaign for the restructuring of MHF, Alagendra requested for a `truce' promising changes and gave his word to me that he will leave at the halfway point of his two-year term after he had cleaned up their act.

That day of reckoning came last Sunday, but there was no announcement of a resignation from Alagendra. Perhaps that was because he is in Hyderabad, India for the ongoing Afro-Asian Games.

But whether or not he will resign as he said he would, on his return at the end of the month, is something that only he would be privy to.

As difficult as it will be for a man who has devoted more than 50 years of his life to the sport, prudence will however dictate for rational thinking here. Which, given the circumstances and the need for the infusion of inventiveness in management, will call for Alagendra to step down from the MHF deputy president's post.

No one can and will ever deny that he has done more for hockey than any man in MHF, but a lot more needs to be done for the sport to propel it to greater heights through more contemporary and inventive methods of sport management.

What Alagendra would realise, if he can take a step or two back to review his tenure in office, is that when you have been in position for that long your ways will become anachronistic. And MHF under the present leadership has reached that point.

You become jaded, so saturated of ideas and imperially set in your ways that you may no longer be open to new ideas and inventive thinking. Which is why when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced his resignation, he had called for the veteran politicians to make way for younger and more inventive candidates.

Of course, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu thinks otherwise. He believes he is still the best leader for Malaysian Indians.

But basically, at some point we will all have to let go after we have done what we can to the best of our abilities. For when else will those waiting in the wings get the chance to show what they have got, if the veterans are over-zealously protective over their turfs.

Alagendra's biggest fear of stepping down is the possibility of the sport being destroyed by the new candidates. But how will we know that, if these new candidates aren't given that chance?

Malaysian sport - which is really no different from the state of affairs

of Indians in the country - has until today yet to achieve world excellence in any major sport.

In soccer we are still struggling to make the World Cup Finals, let alone the Asian finals, and it has been 14 years since we won a Sea Games gold medal. While in hockey, qualifying for the Olympics is everything.

But when are we going to start winning world titles especially when billions have already been invested in sport?

We won't. Not as long as we are still steeped in tradition, the old ways, age-old reserves, and archaic methods.

It's for that reason alone that I believe Alagendra should step down. He has done a great job, but it's time now for someone else to take over that mantle and give it a go - for better or worse.

This goes for MHF president Sultan Azlan Shah as well, whose term ends next October. He too has outlived his effectiveness as a leader.

Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you should do.