

Secrecy of 13th GE date not doing any good
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It is really puzzling why our governing political party seems to be so paranoid and secretive about the 13th general election date.

Maybe the 'think-tank' people within the BN corridors are so steeped in their belief that keeping the date a secret gives a necessary advantage strategy in politics.

If that be the case, wonder why the world of democratic politics does not adhere to the same logic.

In fact, the keeping of the election date under wraps is more a liability than a blessing. It is not helping the BN politicians and neither is it of any good to the business and service sectors.

Investors are keeping cautious watch and tight reins on their purse strings, not knowing when the elections will be called. So, for these past two years, we have been losing out on many doable investment spin-offs.

Even local businessmen are also pinned with worries on the election date.

Their worries are all the more as politicians are going to the fields with 'battlecries for blood' in the name of race and religion; canvassing on terms of 'you help me, I help you'; dares of 'we will at all costs'; and urging people to 'attack when you are commanded'.

And many organisations are also not able to make strategic decisions and commitments to key projects, events and various business related matters because of the worry that such decisions and commitment dates may conflict with the election date.

Can you imagine what it would mean financially if a company plans an international conference in Kuala Lumpur six months ahead only to discover four weeks before the event that it coincides with the nation's general elections?

And society at large too is grossly inconvenienced. You cannot plan your family holidays or social event like wedding dates, parties, get-togethers.

Can you imagine the nightmare if you are suddenly caught by surprise having your wedding celebrations on the same day as the general elections?

Why are politicians not able to prioritise the public and the nation's interest over and above their own party's self-interest?

And yet they have the gall to proclaim that they are for the rakyat, with the rakyat and therefore should be chosen by the rakyat.

Adding to the disadvantage of keeping mum on the election date is the rising palpitations that voters have to endure as expose-after-expose of alleged and true instances of mismanagement, corruption, oversights, and what have you keep surfacing.

Maybe there are people within the fortress of the BN party who believe to the last letter that keeping the election date under wraps will enable them to get the 'opposition' parties to gradually dissipate.

Well that could have held water in bygone days where the IT was confined to print, radio and TV

technology plus fixed phonelines and faxes.

In today's new media networked society, the rules of the game are being rewritten. Twitter, Facebook, texting and Pinterest together with the worldwide web are able to engage and disengage public interest on issues and concerns and opinions on a seamless wave.

'Time' is no more a deciding factor; neither is 'space'. To better understand this 'time' and 'space' dimensions, the politicians and their advisers should research and learn more about the 'networked society' and Appadurai's theories on globalisation.

It would be most foolish to pin your bets on antiquated strategies of bygone eras. This the politicians - especially the old guards, are not learning fast despite the fact that they have been of late parading themselves as newly baptized IT-wigs by tweeting and going on Facebook.

So, if our politicians think they are smart, they should just tell the rakyat and the world when the election date is scheduled (at least give the month and year) and get on with the act of convincing voters of your promises and delivery on promises.

By doing so you would be doing justice to the nation and its citizens; you would also be prudently enabling the business community to plan and exploit the environment positively.

Likewise, you would also give everyone - citizens, friends, associates and foes equal advantage to a well fought election. That is also the hallmark of a stable, well liked, trusted and winning political party.

So if BN has all the right reasons to be the emerging winner - given its loud talk of having had 'ruled' the country for almost half-a-century and saying 'sorry' for some 'mistakes' along the way, then why keep the election date a secret?

You must be fearing your own shadow - aren't you BN?

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