

Najib can't stall SD2 accusations forever

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COMMENT There's a new video clip featuring Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim, or somebody who looks like him, in a sexually compromising situation, to be uploaded on the Net.

But the public is expected to be blasé about the shenanigans.

It may even have the effect of tilting voters, who are still undecided, over to the Pakatan Rakat side in GE13. It's not just familiarity that breeds contempt; asinine insistence on the improbable can be just as good at producing the same effect.

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People want to know about the implications of the latest disclosures, except of course those who are hapless captives of the mainstream media with its report-no-evil attitude to Umno-BN and see-nothing-but-bad stance towards Pakatan.

The severe setbacks to the PM's credibility, inflicted by the latest disclosures in the Saiful Azlan Bukhari sodomy saga and the story about Najib's hand in the late P Balasubramaniam's second statutory declaration, are matters that can only elude investigation if our dysfunctional criminal justice is taken to be well beyond repair.

Just now, the system is in selective prosecutorial mode; comatose it is not.

The PM has not even bothered to tender a denial of the issues imputed to him by Saiful's father, who called Sodomy II an "evil conspiracy" emanating out of the office of the PM, and lawyer Cecil Abraham's claim via Balasubramaniam's counsel that Najib had directed the drafting of the contents of the private eye's second SD, which contradicted the sensational disclosures contained in the first.

Najib should follow Rosmah's example

In a sense, Najib's wife Rosmah Mansor has stolen a march on him. She has written a book of exculpation and defence of herself. At least she shows that she knows she has to say something.

This in contrast to her husband, the PM who can with a straight face claim that he has delivered on his promises to transform the government, a transformation from which he has been rendered exempt, at least in respect of his conduct in some matters with grave implications.

Thus it has come to pass that in the personal morality stakes, Anwar's troubles are over and done with: the legal and public verdicts on him for sexual and other deviancies are that these are unfounded, even malicious, though a newfangled charge may yet be framed over alleged his collusion with foreigners with irredentist ambitions on Sabah.

By contrast, the bothers circling over Najib threaten to open a Pandora's box. These may well lead to the exposure of skeletons hitherto embedded in closets.

Najib can no longer float unperturbed, Teflon-like, above the fray, aided by a criminal justice system that is loath to call him to account.

Formerly, it was Anwar who had to respond to every accusation and defend himself against a system afflicted by an indecent haste with respect to prosecuting members of the Malaysian opposition.

When he sues adversaries that allegedly slander him, he is criticised for not giving a wide enough berth for the practise of freedoms (of speech, in particular) that he has fought for, though it was not clear the sought-after freedoms covered that to defame.

It's a case of damned if you do and damned if you don't.

Public opinion sweepstakes

For Anwar, things have been more a matter of necessity being the mother of salvation: he has to deny and he has to sue to keep the madding crowd from getting away with victories by default.

Fighting tooth and nail throughout the interminable length of Sodomy II, he gained an acquittal that had, in the course of the trial, appeared well-nigh improbable.

His acquittal 14 months ago retrospectively reduced to garbage the video clip purportedly showing him, or a look-alike, in a supposed transaction with a sex worker which was uploaded on the Net in 2011.

What Anwar victory gained in a court of law has provided him with insulation against further trials by defamatory videos in the public domain.

Just now one protagonist in Malaysia's lurid political dramas has taken a pronounced lead in the public opinion sweepstakes, a year on from having enjoyed an unexpected reprieve in the legal arena, while the other, protected all along by unfair immunity, is in a freefall, not only in the legal precincts but also in the public perception gauge.

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