

Will Najib share power with Pakatan?

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COMMENT At 3am on May 6, hours after the Election Commission announced that BN had secured a simple majority of 112 parliamentary seats, I wrote in Malaysiakini explaining that an urban tsunami had washed over Malaysia. Urban voters of all ethnicity and religions rejected the BN formula of race-based politics.

Last night in Petaling Jaya and all roads leading to the Kelana Jaya stadium, some 120,000 Malaysians of all ethnicities and religions gathered to express their dissatisfaction about how the results of the GE were reached. This was a spontaneous gathering that overwhelmed even its organisers, Pakatan Rakyat.

post-ge13 rally in kelana jaya stadium crowd 7This gathering is a clear sign of things to come if we as Malaysians cannot come to a consensus on how to move forward as a united nation. Some of us find it hard to accept the election results. The basic principle of one person one vote, the basic injustice of the Westminster system and 'first past the post' system, have all been laid bare.

In short, to those who gathered in and outside Kelana Jaya stadium, a great injustice occurred on Sunday night.

Social media has not stopped buzzing regarding the allegations of fraud and blatant cheating that occurred during the vote-counting period. This is not helped by certain parties refusing to see the outcome as a Malaysian vote swing away from the ruling party that has less to do with ethnic chauvinism but more to do with the BN's own weaknesses, whether in terms of strategy or policies.

Firstly, instead of complaining, can someone create a Facebook page so that the public can post evidence of fraud, cheating and other materials to verify these allegations? We cannot, and must not, be swayed by emotions. We must verify and seek clarification before we act. It is important to remember that once peace is broken, it is very difficult to put the pieces back.

Whilst the judiciary continues to suffer from a trust deficit, one must follow due process if one wants to continue to have rule of law.

The courts are guided and restricted by existing legislation but if there is incontrovertible evidence, it needs to be collected and submitted formally to allow

the judiciary to do its job. In the face of strong and solid evidence, that is also shared in an open platform for all to see, it will be very difficult for anyone to sweep things under the carpet.

Race-baiting must end

Malaysia is now at a critical juncture and we need decisive leadership. This is PM Najib Razak's chance to demonstrate that he can command the confidence of the entire nation and rise above partisan politics. He must not take sides if he is sincere in calling for national reconciliation.

NONE All the race-baiting must end. The best thing that former PM Dr Mahathir Mohamad can do for Malaysia at this moment is to give way to Najib. No matter how poorly he thinks the BN performed, Najib led the coalition to electoral victory. Having campaigned for Najib, he must now let the PM lead instead of forever being a symbolic alternative PM. Even Mahathir must know that he cannot live forever and that the BN needs to be able to survive without him.

Malaysians voted for change on May 5 and as even the most loyal of Umno loyalists like former New Straits Times editor A Kadir Jasin have said that the BN did not meet their aspirations. Whilst BN has the parliamentary majority, it does not have the popular vote. This puts the government in a very difficult position.

Najib instinctively called for national reconciliation but he must first accept the reality that brand BN did not resonate so well in the cities. The BN lost all capital cities in all Malaysian states. Only then can he find the will to bring about national reconciliation.

Will he propose a national unity government and offer to share power with Pakatan? As far-fetched as that may sound, it might be the only thing left for the BN to do. A national unity government requires a lot of give and take between both coalitions but in the long run will benefit Malaysia as we need to take tough decisions to reduce our budget deficit and national debt.

If the BN does not think out of the box, it must realise that none of its policies will be supported by more than half of the electorate. Every negative happening, including the rise of the price of petrol, bread and other inflationary action that may be the market trying to find its equilibrium, will be blamed on the government.

It can forget about difficult policies like introducing the goods and services tax (GST). Eventually, it will not be able to fulfill its many election pledges including the continued provision of BR1M (Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia).

Challenge the results in court

A national unity government may seem absurd to a ruling coalition with 133 seats in a 222-seat parliament but the BN needs to remember that the Pakatan have made in-roads into all the states. It increased its Malay vote bank and this upward trend will definitely continue. Najib may very well be the last PM from BN if he does not handle the situation with tact and wisdom.

azlanNo Malaysian wants to go down the road of the Arab Spring. No matter how bad we think the BN government is, Malaysia is not Egypt or Syria. We have some very serious problems but only if we seek to work together can we overcome them.

There is really no need to be childish and point fingers at any one particular ethnic group or community for our collective performance at the general elections. That is an unproductive way that prevents us from moving forward.

If Pakatan feels cheated of electoral victory, it must take their case to court. We, with access to social media, must provide a platform for solid evidence to be presented to the public. However, do not neglect due process.

At the same time, if we want to heal and achieve real progress, we need to start exploring our common interests and not allow the election results to be hijacked by those who insist on seeing through racial lens.

Now is the time for Najib to show his mettle. Is he PM of all Malaysians or only those who voted for him? True reconciliation can only happen if he has the courage to extend his hand in partnership and reach out all Malaysians.

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