

Kajang polls a waste of time... for BN

MalaysiaKini.com

Feb 11, 2014

COMMENT The temperature was close to sizzling. So I decided to remain indoors and seek respite from boredom in the realm of online videos. Then I chanced upon an epic scene.

The hero flips a cigarette into the air, whips out a pistol, points it upwards, and fires without looking. The bullet ignites the cigarette, which he then catches between his lips with ease.

For the uninitiated, this might lead to a stabbing pain in the chest medical practitioners refer to as myocardial infraction. But for the rest of us, this is Rajnikanth! The reigning superstar of Indian cinema, whose outlandish celluloid antics have defied logic and the laws of physics for decades.

But far from being ridiculed, he is revered and loved, with a fan base numbering in the millions, transcending racial, age, language, cultural, social and even geographical barriers.

Peculiarly, it is the same people who cheer and applaud when Rajnikanth executes his mind-numbing stunts, who are quick to condemn other heroes for bludgeoning common sense.

Somehow the superstar has been given a carte blanche to push, or rather butcher, the boundaries, which his critics and rivals have trouble understanding.

Across the ocean. In Malaysia, there is an individual with similar appeal. He is not an actor but is often accused of theatrics worthy of an Oscar, or at least, the Indian movie award.

And like Rajnikanth, Anwar Ibrahim too is an enigma. Both rising above the odds when none expected them to do so.

BN undone by its own doing

Despite having advanced well into their 60s, the two men still possess an electrifying presence and the voltage is lethal when in front of the camera or on stage.

From being labelled a racist and religious bigot when he was the second-in-command for the coalition which fate later dictated that he opposed with a vengeance, Anwar is now perceived as a messiah (by the loyalists) as well as a necessary evil (by the rest) to deliver Malaysia from the stranglehold of a diabolical and corrupt regime.

Much to the frustration of his adversaries, the mud-slinging fails to deter or weaken him. On the contrary, the attempts to soil his reputation tend to backfire and make him even stronger.

All allegations against him are dismissed as baseless, all videos and photos doctored, all evidence - including traces of semen - tampered with or planted, the police and judiciary are in cahoots with their political masters to throw him behind bars.

And those within the opposition who crossed swords with him have, from riding atop the wave of popularity, sunken into the political abyss with a Judas-like infamy.

With the Sodomy II appeal now being heard, the powers-that-be are also in a conundrum as to which Anwar is more dangerous - the one who is left to roam the streets as a free man or the one kept locked behind bars.

But the people cannot be blamed for disbelieving the allegations leveled against the opposition leader and his comrades.

Decades of arrogance, blatant abuse of power, corruption, racism and a slew of other misdeeds have led them to view with contempt and disdain all that is associated with BN.

Exacerbating the situation, characters like Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Dr Mahathir Mohamad never fail to remind Malaysians that no matter how bad Pakatan Rakyat and Anwar are, BN is much worse.

Take for example how Zahid, without the slightest regret nor reprimanding those responsible, had dismissed the calls to punish the NGO which offered a bounty to those who would film themselves slapping a woman DAP MP.

When confronted with such remarks, one cannot be blamed for feeling the urge to put a palm to his face instead, hoping that it would jump start the portion of his brain that is responsible for sensible thinking.

These statements serve to only strengthen the speculation that it is Umno's hands which are stained with chicken blood and an assortment of other mindless antics designed to stoke tension with the aim of safeguarding the balance of power regardless of the consequences.

Neck on chopping block

So against this backdrop, it is not surprising that many in BN consider the Kajang by-election a waste of time and funds.

In the past, the queue of hopefuls would have gone around the block but now it would be difficult to find even one, apart from a handful of court jesters, who would be willing to put his or her neck on the chopping block.

Contesting a PKR seat won with a comfortable margin is bleak enough a prospect, let alone having to lock horns with a superstar.

Imagine 12-days of gruelling campaign, traveling on foot from door-to-door in the heat, shaking countless of sweaty palms, speaking at various ceramah, visiting morning and night markets, kissing babies and elderly aunties, planting trees, grilling satay... And doing all of these, knowing that an electoral whipping is in store.

What more if the candidate is from MCA and is forced to explain to the large number of Chinese voters how come there are people slaughtering chickens, spilling blood on banners, calling them ungrateful immigrants, wanting to revoke their citizenship, while Umno leaders keep silent and MCA leaders can only issue press statements in protest and nothing more.

Despite the avalanche of criticism about the engineered by-election, no political pundit would dare predict a defeat for the PKR candidate. So apart from Anwar being struck by lightning before filing his nomination papers, the outcome appears to be sealed.

During a recent [interview](#) with *Malaysiakini*, Anwar, in responding to Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim's description of the former as a "political animal" and himself as a "corporate animal", replied in jest, "We are not animals".

But if one observes the animated and calculated responses to the questions posed during the interview, and the glint in his eyes when answering them, it is obvious that he is a political beast that thrives on a diet of challenges.

One only hopes that the beast does not devour the trust and faith that the majority of the Malaysian electorate have placed in him.

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