Will Najib have the last laugh?
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COMMENT It was a marriage doomed from the beginning. Two parties with diametrically opposed ideologies sitting at the same table.

But somehow, PAS and DAP managed to keep their rocky relationship intact for several years, largely due to Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim.

Now, the two seem to be heading for an acrimonious split, much to the delight of their rivals.

Irrespective of whether PAS' theocratic aim of implementing hudud materialises, the opposition bloc could be the first to lose a limb, or worse its head, over the issue.

And there is little Anwar can do from behind bars to soothe two warring parties.

Delaying his stand on the hudud bill is shaping up to be a masterstroke by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak as both DAP and PAS have walked straight into the trap.

Perhaps there is more than meets the eye, some have even wondered about a secret pact between the ulama faction in PAS and Umno.

Having lost the trust of Chinese voters, both these parties need the Malay/Muslim voters to remain relevant.

Despite an avalanche of allegations against him, Najib appears to remain strong in Umno, though certain quarters are speculated to be engineering his downfall.

The hudud bill had surfaced at an opportune time, distracting attention from questions surrounding his wealth and the quagmire in the government-own strategic investment fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

And now Najib is watching with glee from the sidelines as the fireworks erupt in Pakatan Rakyat.

Since the 2008 general election, BN has been hemorrhaging. All its efforts in luring back support, especially the minority Chinese, have proven to be in vain.

The last general election two years ago saw Najib performing even worse than his predecessor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, where the ruling coalition lost not just more seats, but pulled in only 47 percent of the popular vote.

Edging closer to defeat with each national polls, the future of BN appeared bleak.

A fragile pact

Individually, Pakatan parties - PKR, DAP and PAS - do not have much of an impact but collectively, they are a powerful force, one capable of altering the status quo and forming the next federal government.

Unable to contain their influence in the elections, the next best thing for BN would be to trigger an implosion.

One advantage that BN has over its rival is cohesion, forged in power and wealth. So differences are often settled without them threatening to break up the coalition.

And while Najib has his own problem with its non-Muslim coalition partners over hudud, when push comes to shove, they are expected to toe the Umno line.

On the other hand, Pakatan is a fragile pact - the ties among these three disparate parties are held together with nothing more than paper and glue.

The current imbroglio has also angered many Malaysians who placed their trust and faith in the opposition, believing that it is indeed capable of ushering in a new dawn.

On this note, Najib appears to have been successful - Anwar in prison, the opposition heading for a divorce and the public suffering from political fatigue.

Instead of winning over the hearts and minds of voters, which has proven to be futile, it is wiser to foment division from within.

Indeed, that would have been much easier than crossing swords with formidable foes on the battlefield.

Subjected to much ridicule since taking over the reins, the current political situation, however, warrants the question: Will Najib have the last laugh?

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