

COMMENT | 22 reasons why Dr M cannot be the next PM

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COMMENT | Why this article? Because there has been a raucous cry for Dr Mahathir Mohamad to be installed as the prime minister yet again - the only one the Malays respect, the only one who can keep everyone together, we need him, he is competent, etc.

But these are lies as we shall show shortly, shouted and screamed by his supporters and troopers and those way too desperate to get back into power after tasting it for some time. For others, especially those whose tongues are rather restrained right now, it may be a matter of whether they are prosecuted or not, they remain silent, letting others speak for them.

And why 22 reasons? Because by some quirk of fate he was PM the second time around for some 22 months, after his 22-year reign ending in 2003 in his earlier stint. After 17 years, at the ripe old age of 93, he was back in the saddle, riding again.

In June 2006, I wrote an article about what I thought about his 22-year stint previously through 22 groups of questions making, as you might expect, unflattering conclusions about his leadership. The article was entitled “22 Questions for Mahathir” one, for each year he was in office. You can look at the questions and conclusions here if you have missed or forgotten them.

In this pivotal moment in the history of the country I thought it would be good, that in the same vein 14 years ago, I offer 22 reasons, one for each month he was in office, why he should NOT be PM yet again. Believe me, there are more reasons than that - I had to edit them down.

Without further ado, let's get into the reasons. In the interest of brevity and readability I am not going to say too much but state one or two of the most important supports for my assertions. Here goes:

1. He cannot be trusted as he breaks promises and lies. He promised over and over again that Anwar Ibrahim would succeed him when he had no intention to let him do so. He said much earlier that his only aim was to remove Najib Razak as PM but changed his tune later.

2. He broke manifesto promises. He excused that by saying he did not expect Pakatan Harapan to win. The truth was he did not want to because many of the

promises could be quite easily met. He even pulled out of a commitment to sign Icerd, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

3. He did not reform and he had no plan. He did not make any of the reforms promised, especially with regard to balancing powers within the administration and reducing the power of the PM. Instead he became dictatorial despite, having only 13 MPs out of 222 under his wing, including himself, in the 2018 elections. He offered no plan for the nation going forward.

4. He gave more power to Daim than the cabinet. One of the first things he did after becoming PM again was to appoint his bosom buddy and crony Daim Zainuddin to head the controversial Council of Eminent Persons and gave them 100 days to come up with a plan. They usurped the powers of the cabinet and their recommendations were filed away under the Officials Secrets Act. No plan.

5. He divided Harapan by playing the parties against each other. He schemed to do this, and sad to say, it was so good that Harapan itself broke down and there was a change in government.

6. He drove a wedge between PKR and DAP by cleverly making DAP stalwart Lim Guan Eng finance minister, earning the DAP's eternal gratitude and grovelling

which made them say it was the PM's prerogative over every questionable action Mahathir took.

7. He encouraged Azmin to rise against Anwar. Secure with DAP support but not wanting Anwar to succeed, he drove a wedge between Anwar and his long-time supporter Azmin Ali by simply offering him the post of minister of economic affairs - no cabinet post for Anwar though.

Simultaneously he took some power off Lim, now desperate for the third coming of Mahathir which would ensure his corruption charge would not be resurrected.

8. His cabinet was out of all proportion to popular representation. Every single MP of his 13 got important posts - prime minister, home minister, four other full ministers, six deputy ministers and one chief minister (his son). Other chief minister posts went to Bersatu assemblypersons, for example, Perak and Johor.

9. He was not consultative. He was brutally open about it - prime ministerial prerogative.

10. He made dubious appointments. Again, he claimed it was his prerogative. A standout example: An Anwar opponent became MACC chief.

11. He wanted another Malaysian car. He went back to this old nonsense which cost Malaysian car buyers hundreds of billions in extra duties - this time it was to be some sort of electric vehicle.

12. He is too close to cronies. One example - he holds meetings at the Albukhary Foundation where he and his wife are given huge offices. How can he not favour businessman billionaire Syed Mokhtar Albukhary?

13. He tried to sell national assets to cronies. His pretext was that Khazanah Nasional was not selling assets to bumiputeras - it had no such mandate. He used pressure to force the entire Khazanah Board to resign.

14. He made bad deals with China. Originally, that RM66 billion East Coast Rail Link project was supposed to be cancelled but miraculously Daim saved it through secret negotiations. Through other undercover deals he "saved" other projects too, projects Malaysia did not need. How brilliant!

15. He has no significant Malay support. His party, which was supposed to bring in the Malay heartland votes was thrashed by Umno and PAS. Bersatu contested only in Peninsular Malaysia, and among Harapan coalition partners contested the most seats here with 52, followed by PKR with 51, DAP with 39 and Amanah with 27. PKR won over 80% of seats contested in the peninsula but 67% overall. DAP

won 89% of seats contested. Also, remember Tanjong Piai. Enough said.

16. He has only five MPs, including himself. Much of his own party abandoned him and he got sacked from Bersatu, and is now challenging that decision. Still, he wants to be PM? How ridiculous! Ask him to go get some numbers first.

17. He is too old and too incompetent. At 95, he is showing his age. This job requires someone more mentally alert, with more stamina. Mahathir does not cut it. He is incompetent. When the incompetent don't realise they are, they become much more dangerous because they think they know it all and experiment. Mahathir's experiments have been far too costly.

18. He had his chance. And yes, 22 years and 22 months is more than enough time to make his mark. He does not need any more opportunities.

19. He simply does not deserve it. What did he do to deserve another chance? Was he exceptional, innovative and brilliant? No, he was dull, jaded, faded and completely clueless as to what to do.

20. If he is given a chance, he will play us all out again. Even if he signed a legal statement to stay on for just 22 days or 22 hours, he will break it. It is his nature to cling to power at all costs.

21. He was responsible for the entire mess in the first place. How could one even think of making him PM again when he had all the power, did nothing and then ruined the party by refusing to stick to his promise. He was responsible for the Sheraton Move and was prepared to betray Harapan yet again until Muhyiddin Yassin beat him to it and betrayed both Mahathir and Harapan.

22. It is time for him to compromise. For too long, others had to wait while this man fiddled about, taking his time, not doing anything and making weird self-centred statements all over the place. It's time he went away instead. He has long overstayed his welcome.

Well, that's the 22 reasons. Revisit them and you will agree it is absolutely crazy and mad to have him back. I believe that most Malaysians are decent, sane people and therefore humbly assert I speak for most Malaysians.

If he does not agree to support the Harapan candidate, sack him and those who support him. Let him ride into the sunset and let the sunset on him. We have had enough, he has done enough damage to the country, more than any other man.

You cannot go to war with an ally who has betrayed you numerous times. You must cut the gangrene out to save the limb before it is too late. We have already waited too long. No more compromises please, Harapan - and PKR.

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