COMMENT | We need a 'pemimpin', not another 'abah'

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COMMENT | The nation needs a strong leader and not another daddy.

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin is wrong to think he can become our surrogate father. His 'abah' tag is just a pathetic attempt to endear himself to us, but it has failed, miserably. Moreover, the majority of us, are content with our fathers.

Most of our fathers became our inspiration and a symbol of strength. They guided us in our formative years and urged us on when the going got tough. They did not threaten us with the whip, nor did they display the obsessive pursuit of power and control, as is wont in some sadistic fathers.

Actions speak louder than words and my father's advice about visiting other people was simple. He said, "You ring the bell, introduce yourself to the occupants, state your intention to meet a member of the household, and enter, only when invited. You do not slink in via the back door like a thief, or as an

unwelcome visitor."

Father said that I would have to earn my place in the world, that learning English would be the ticket to making the world my oyster and he championed education because it would lead to financial freedom. In his lifetime, he had presumably seen enough Malay women who were financially dependent on their husbands, and who were later cast aside when their unfaithful husbands secretly married a young wife or kept many mistresses.

A multicultural outlook was a part of the everyday life of my father and I, at home and at work. Today the majority of the non-Malays who were part of my circle of friends, have emigrated. Many are victims of affirmative action policies. At the same time, many Malays have been corrupted by extremist preachings.

As in many other families, my father was religious, but we kept dogs as pets, played with Barbie dolls, received piggybanks and had no issues with Christmas carols or with playing stringed instruments. Visiting houses of non-Malay and non-Muslim friends was not an issue.

Like many fathers, mine did not show off his religious credentials. He did not drop to his knees in prayer, in front of a crowd, when he heard I'd excelled in an exam, nor did he claim our good fortune was purely because of Islamic principles.

My father did not have a favourite child, nor did he pit one child against another, presumably because he knew this will only undermine our self-confidence and trust.

A few months ago, a Malay friend, who was euphoric about Muhyiddin being in power, told me to give ‘abah’ a chance. Today, this friend's support for Muhyiddin has waned.

He realises that Malaysia is now on its knees, with a crippled economy, students saddled with an uncertain future, people being laid off and increasing numbers of Malaysians falling ill from coronavirus. He has noticed that the ones who are left unscathed are the political class, who keep their perks and their positions, and who are unpunished when they refuse to comply with the strict coronavirus SOP guidelines.

Abysmal track record

Muhyiddin's track record in each of the ministries he previously led as an Umno-Baru man in BN, or as a Bersatu man in the Pakatan Harapan coalition, was abysmal.

When he was the education minister, he announced the allocation of millions of

ringgits of aid to the dilapidated schools in East Malaysia, but when Harapan took over, we saw the deplorable conditions had not been improved. So where did the money go? Is Muhyiddin so naïve that he does not know about leakages through corruption or mismanagement?

When he was agriculture minister, Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's husband was awarded RM250 million for the disastrous National Feedlot Corporation project. Again, Muhyiddin failed to keep tabs on any of the major agricultural projects.

As a home minister in the Harapan administration, he approved the religious gathering at Sri Petaling that saw thousands of attendees, some of whom were infected with coronavirus, to spread the disease and infect others, including participants from overseas.

Last January, he said that the cabinet would be informed of the results of the RCI into the human trafficking at Wang Kelian in Perlis, but to date, there has been no announcement.

After engineering the Sheraton Move, Muhyiddin claimed that he was not desperate for the position of prime minister because his sole intention was to "save" Malaysia. He claimed that he was the PM for all Malaysians; but many could see through his pathetic attempt at damage control, intended to soften the

blow from his "I am a Malay first" image.

On March 17, Muhyiddin arranged a meeting with heads of states to tackle the coronavirus threat; however, the five Harapan-led states were not invited and the head of the civil servants, Mohd Zuki Ali, took the rap for this blunder, which was alleged to be an oversight.

One omission could be considered a mistake, but when another coronavirus meeting, on Oct 3, excluded the remaining three Harpan-led states, Muhyiddin's true partisan colours were again exposed. He plays politics with our lives in the war against coronavirus.

We don't need another ‘abah’ who is selfish, narcissistic, divisive and consumed with power. Malaysians need a strong leader who unites us, not one driven by his ego.

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