

LETTER | A need for strategic calm

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LETTER | Congratulations to Ismail Sabri Yaakob for taking up the mantle of the ninth prime minister.

There is nothing normal about the situation; it could not have been scripted but it has kept the spectrum of media, mainstream and social, gripped.

The first order of business for the prime minister is the formation of a cabinet – a task usually completed in the glow of the “honeymoon” period of a newly minted prime minister.

The situation now does not afford such luxuries; the Covid-19 pandemic has created a reality that makes every decision critical and with very little margin for error.

While Malaysians have become true connoisseurs of political intrigue, there is

such thing as too much of a good thing. The months of the slow-burning political crisis that threatened to become a constitutional flashpoint, distracted the collective focus on the twin existential problem of this generation: the global pandemic and the ensuing economic fallout.

In this context, there is an opportunity and indeed a need to develop "strategic calm" to allow the best and brightest minds in the country to solve the myriad of problems at hand.

Moving forward, there is a necessity to develop the concept of collective responsibility. The secret sauce of effective teamwork is required to design viable solutions to the many present challenges.

From this vantage point, the most pressing problem is unemployment and mental health issues, which has created a perfect storm, negatively impacting business confidence and productivity of individuals in the business ecosystem.

We do not assume to advise the prime minister but if we could respectfully make a humble suggestion: make principled decisions based on international best practice with the backing of real-time data that creates the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people, in the shortest possible time.

This may be difficult, but it will be the best way to a sustainable and rapid economic recovery that the business community desires.

Above all, this is an opportunity to bring a unique style of leadership to the esteemed position that is the toughest job in the country.

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