

**YOURSAY | Not much of a choice, but vote, we must**

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**Yoursay**

YOURSAY | 'You are either voting for 'more Umno' or 'less Umno'.'

Dr Raman Letchumanan: Immediately after Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaacob announced the dissolution of Parliament at 3pm on Oct 10, the Palace issued a statement regarding this matter, the main points being:

1. The royal audience was not scheduled,
2. The king expressed regret over recent political developments, and
3. His Majesty had no choice but to accede to the request to dissolve Parliament.

Without proffering to decipher, which no one else can, let me trace recent political events.

Umno has launched a concerted campaign and convened several high-level

meetings calling for early elections, despite concerns on the contrary by many. The campaign was relentless. In fact, Umno was so sure that Parliament would be soon dissolved and had geared up for elections even before the announcement.

I believe the matter was discussed in cabinet and there was no consensus as 12 ministers petitioned the Agong to delay elections.

Section 40 (1) of the Constitution says: "In the exercise of his functions under this Constitution or federal law, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong shall act in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet or of a Minister acting under the general authority of the Cabinet, except as otherwise provided by this Constitution."

I would assume such advice must be a consensus decision by the cabinet. Was the PM acting on behalf of the cabinet or Umno regarding the dissolution of Parliament?

Be that as it may, the king, having discretionary powers, has decided, and all should respect that.

So, what's next for Malaysia? The only choice seems to be selecting the present government or the opposition. While there are core supporters on both sides,

many may be undecided or not happy with either one.

But vote, we must. My take is every rational person should ensure the right persons are voted in to govern us.

Before I explain further, we should recognise that there is Umno in the current government and Umno DNA in the opposition in the likes of former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, PKR president Anwar Ibrahim, Bersatu chairperson Muhyiddin Yassin, among others.

So essentially, there is only one choice (PAS vacillates among the winners). Don't delude yourself about ABU (Anything But Umno) or No to Anwar/DAP slogans. These are political gimmicks. At the end of the day, you are either voting for 'more Umno' or 'less Umno'. Umno is not a bad thing, but look at what it has become, comparing our founding leaders and current leaders.

What happens when Umno loses, like in the 14th general elections (GE14)? Well, it brought down the Pakatan Harapan government after just 22 months. Then it brought down the Perikatan Nasional government. Then it installed a minority Umno government.

But that is not enough, it wants full control and agitated for early elections and

got its way. Returning the mandate to the people is all hogwash. Umno just can't play second fiddle one day longer.

Therefore, to me, it is a waste of time to vote along party lines on the assumption they are on opposite poles. That is not an exercise in true democracy. We should vote for individuals who have proven character, integrity, intelligence and genuine concern for the rakyat. It doesn't matter which party they are from.

In the next one month, both camps will slander each other and jostle for your votes. But they will seldom talk about themselves and convince us why we should vote for them. But among them, there will be some good and hopeful ones. If we don't think along party lines, we will have good candidates to vote for.

If there are enough good people, we can hope for a good government, but if we vote for a party of corrupts, all we can get is Ali Baba and his 40 thieves. I think there are enough voters who are enlightened. Just think and act for yourself, don't worry whether such an approach is idealistic. Give Malaysia a chance.

In any case, the ringgit is trading at around RM4.8 per US dollar and the stock market is at 1,300 levels, among the lowest in history.

I don't expect any major change in government in the near future. What voters

may not accomplish, the economy will certainly force it on the ruling class if there is continued wanton spending and uncontrolled borrowings. Like they say, it is the economy, stupid! It is foolhardy to win an election by throwing money around, especially money we don't have.

Kilimanjaro: Ismail Sabri had taken a number of "brickbats" but this latest statement smacks of another hypocrisy.

Isn't it surprising that he woke up one morning and some kind of wisdom or even guilt started bothering him - that the claim of an illegitimate government and a backdoor government had started to "haunt" him.

He perhaps couldn't hold that guilt anymore that he had decided enough is enough. If this kind of "enlightenment" had come when either he and Umno brought down an elected government or when he became the PM, then this could be believable and even salutary.

Not only this sermon from him is not worth any value, it also strips him of any legitimacy and sincerity. Twelve ministers wrote to the Agong explaining to defer elections. Ismail Sabri seemed to have taken offence, and rightly so.

It erodes his legitimacy and those who wrote to the king are unbelievably

recalcitrant. One would assume that not all cabinet members would have a single voice on any matters raised and debated. Notwithstanding, following the cardinal principle of "collective responsibility", once a cabinet decision is made, every cabinet member is supposed to toe the line.

Instead, the 12 ministers ignored or disregarded the cabinet's decision and "complained" to the Agong - this is not mere ignorance but an "uneducated" and morally repulsive behaviour.

The option for this if they do not agree with the decision is to resign from the cabinet. That would be the most honourable way, but instead what we came to know is the disgraceful behaviour of some ministers who wanted to hold on to their coats and ties, devoid of any moral or principle.

But it is necessary to see the basis of this problem. When a PM is head of a coalition government, it is incumbent upon him to be one. A coalition comes with different views but the perception may have been that Ismail Sabri may have pandered to Umno's views rather than the coalition's view.

So, when a PM corners his cabinet colleagues with his party's views, such a Catch-22 situation may have meant only one thing - damned you do and damned you don't.

Such a dysfunctional cabinet cannot be expected to solve a country's problems and Umno had become known as one that pulls down governments and Ismail Sabri is part of that Umno.

His reputation may have suffered a huge blow. It now has become the talk that he is nothing more than a remote-controlled figure, dancing to the tunes and schemes of Umno.

RedWolf4463: Lame excuse, Ismail Sabri. The truth is you're controlled by the court cluster who wants to get out of jail.

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