

Twin peaks of BN's arrogance of power
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COMMENT If there is one event that starkly demonstrates the folly of giving the BN government a brute majority in Parliament, it is what will take place in that not-so-august - by reason of what is likely to happen - chamber today.

A motion to suspend Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim for allegedly misleading the House in remarks he made at a sitting last March will be tabled and will pass by dint of BN's majority.

If that happens, it would be a dastardly act of piracy.

The decision to send the suspension motion to the House was passed by the powerful rights and privileges without extension of the elementary right of defence to the member from Permatang Pauh.

NONETwo opposition members of the committee, PKR's R Sivarasa and DAP's Karpal Singh walked out because of the refusal of the right of defence to the parliamentary opposition leader.

Anwar was arraigned by the committee for remarks he made in Parliament last March. He had linked Prime Minister Najib Razak's '1Malaysia' to the 'One Israel' policy introduced by Labour Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Barak in 1999.

He said that the international public relations consultants, Apco Worldwide, who are well-paid PR advisers to the Najib administration, were behind both policies. When challenged to furnish proof of his assertions, the opposition leader, in a follow-up speech, gave a detailed exposition, backed by documentary evidence.

He adduced evidence that Apco Worldwide had been PR consultants to some of the world's more putrescent dictators, like the late Sani Abacha of Nigeria, and Hindu chauvinistic governor of the Indian state of Gujarat, Narendra Modi.

Shameful conduct

Anwar's substantiated arguments ought to have been enough to deflate the charge that he was misleading the House.

Further Apco's links to dictatorial regimes that are infamous for gross violations of human rights and for corruption should have had his would-be indictors cowering in shame.

But no, the BN cabal in Parliament, when they see fit, cares fig for the standard conventions of shameful conduct. They voted to arraign Anwar before the privileges committee.

After four meetings, the privileges committee decided by brute majority to commend a motion to suspend to the House without according Anwar the right to a hearing.

NONEIf one thinks that these shenanigans are aberrations rather than the essence of BN rule, consider what the PM said the other day about the anticipated snap poll that the

government is shaping to call.

He was quoted as saying that if "BN cannot win, no one can" win the election. It was a chilling remark that ought to have him indicted before the bar of the Malaysian electorate for culpable ignorance of the Federal Constitution.

After a hearing, which is surrogate for the polls, he ought to be found guilty of the charge and the punishment for him and his parliamentary cabal should be relief of their duties as overseers of the national estate.

Mr Opposition's plea

Before the 6th General Election of April of 1982, the then 'Mr Opposition', Dr Tan Chee Khoo, made a passionate plea to Malaysian voters that they should give the opposition a third of the share of seats in Parliament because he said that too big a majority for the BN would be a "negation of parliamentary democracy."

NONEHis plea fell on deaf ears.

The new administration of Dr Mahathir Mohamad romped to a rout of the opposition in that election which was the pattern of electoral results, except for two instances – in the 1990 and 1999 polls – when the opposition came within hailing distance of a denial of a two-third majority to the BN.

Then, in a sudden break in the pattern of overwhelming majorities for the BN, Malaysian voters decided in March 2008 to heed Anwar's call for change and gave the opposition a more than one-third share of parliamentary seats and control of five state legislatures.

One would think after setbacks as severe as these, the BN would be chastened and humbled.

Almost three years after the seismic power shifts of March 2008, the BN's arrogance of power is as staggering as ever.

The expected suspension of the opposition leader today, coming on the heels of a stupendously insolent remark by Najib, underscores the difference between redeemable ignorance and horrible incorrigibility.

The wages for the latter ought to be relegation to the opposition bench, electorally that is, for a term at the very least.

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