

**DAP, PKR stumbles to be expected**  
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Well, that didn't take long, did it? The polling booths have hardly emptied, and the bickering among and against the Barisan Rakyat (BA) coalition has already started. There's conflict over the Perak Menteri Besar's post, while the Selangor and Perak palaces appear to be engendering some political mischief. MCPX

Meanwhile, Pak Lah and Mohamed Khir Toyo have already given a preview of Umno's line of attack over the next four years - what else, but harping on the erosion of Malay rights - while the mainstream media is beginning to stir up some mischief of its own (Beware! PAS is going to turn Kedah into an Islamic state, yadda,yadda).

Now, the DAP appears to have got their wires crossed, with the Perak branch seemingly at odds with the national body over who should have been the Perak Menteri Besar.

Before anybody gets into panic mode, take a deep breath and relax. This is just a healthy, robust Parliamentary democracy at work, as rival parties pounce on stumbles by their opponents. Did you expect everyone to now sit under the banyan tree, sip teh tarik and sing 'Kumbaya'?

That would be boring, frankly.

And, boy, have the DAP stumbled politically right out of the gate. Clearly, the party is not used to governing and is going to go through some teething pains as it adjusts to learning the subtle nuances of being the government in some states.

The DAP's style in opposition has always been that of a bull rampaging in a china shop. And that has probably been necessary, considering the odds it has always faced, and that have allowed it to survive successfully. But it seems to have instinctively adopted the same approach in its initial days in government, and it has resulted in some embarrassing setbacks.

First, the Perak brouhaha. The DAP clearly did not know what its right hand was doing while the left hand was doing something else. The state DAP submitted three names on the understanding that whoever the palace chose would be acceptable.

Now that the palace has chosen the sole PAS rep - maybe with a view to create some ripples within the opposition coalition - it is bad form for Lim Kit Siang to have a knee-jerk reaction more suited to being an opposition figure rather than the head of a party that is now part of some state governments.

There is also the little matter of the state constitution, which states that the MB should be a Muslim Malay. It comes across as hypocritical for DAP to whine about the Perak palace following the state constitution when the DAP itself is part of a coalition whose sole aim in the elections was to deny the national BN a two-thirds majority and the ability to amend the national constitution!

Second, Lim Guan Eng has also shown some political amateurism in his first few days as Penang chief minister. It was silly of him to declare openly that the state government would

no longer follow the New Economic Policy, and then to go on and bad-mouth the NEP.

Hello, the policy may be unfair and may have engendered lots of corruption and mal-administration. But the Malays, as a whole, have clearly benefitted from the policy, and to stand up and declare right off the bat that you are going to pull this 'rug' from under them is not smart politics.

Why not just not say anything about the NEP? Why not just say we are going to share things more fairly in the future without heightening the anxiety many Malays must be quietly feeling after last Saturday? This is not the time to create a ruckus. For the first year or so, it would be better if the governments formed by the Barisan Rakyat quietly go about finding their feet as governments and make everyone comfortable with having them at the helm.

Tread softly, please. At least until you have gained some experience and the people's confidence.

Is it any surprise that the seasoned player Pak Lah immediately latched onto the stray pass from Guan Eng and scored a quick goal by warning him about ... yes, you guessed it .... eroding Malay rights?

Developments of the last few days also seem to indicate that this marriage of convenience among the PKR, DAP and PAS, forged solely out of anger over the excesses of the BN, is going to face a rocky future. It's all muhibbah now, but it is difficult to see how the DAP and PAS, who have absolutely nothing in common ideologically, will be able to forge a deeper partnership.

In fact, the glue that held it all together during the run-up to the election was Anwar Ibrahim. One wonders how long he will be willing to continue being the referee between these two parties.

After all, Anwar has his own party to look after. And let's get real here. Anwar naturally wants to be the nation's undisputed leader, backed by his own party holding a parliamentary majority, not someone who is going to spend the rest of his political life putting out other people's fires.

So interesting times lie ahead.

Meanwhile, could someone please clarify what is the accepted official term for the opposition .... er, Barisan Rakyat .... er, Barisan Alternatif? At least it would make things easier for humble commentators like myself to write clearly about things.

Hey, a standard name could be the first solid cooperative effort following the elections - if the DAP and PAS can agree on it first!

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