

Flirtation with opposition leads to full affair
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As we wake up to a new and refreshing political climate in Malaysia, it is bemusing to note that the component parties of the Barisan Nasional that performed dismally in the elections are now considering doing some soul searching and post mortem to ascertain the reasons for their losses. MCPX

It is difficult to decide whether one should feel a tinge of sympathy for them or be totally outraged by the fact that the ruling elite were so entrenched in their respective ivory towers that they were unable to ascertain the mood of the electorate.

It amazes one that the BN did not envisage the people being revolted by the Prime Minister's threat that Indians and Chinese may not be represented in cabinet if the component parties' candidates were not voted in, the distasteful propaganda against an opposition woman MP, and the constant reminder of the 1969 riots that followed the last time the BN performed so badly in an election.

How could one feel anything but nauseous when a 15-year old heart transplant patient was used to garner support for the ruling elite or when those who have lost their loved ones to, or themselves been victims of crime, are assured that Malaysia is an incredibly safe place. The ruling parties, rather than addressing the concerns of the ordinary person, such as rising prices, rising unemployment, rising crime, racial and religious strife and corruption at every level of society focused entirely on playing the racial game and stirring up fear in the hope that Malaysians could, once again, be intimidated into voting for the classroom bully.

There would have been no need for any soul searching had the government listened to the people's concerns during the various public rallies that preceded the general election instead of either, ignoring the voices of reason, or suppressing them, sometimes with brute force. It was truly incredulous that the government was unable - or refused - to comprehend the people's need for safer streets, an incorruptible judiciary and greater personal freedoms.

Malaysians may not have intended to embrace the opposition so overwhelmingly. The goal may have been to rebuke the BN by flirting with the opposition. This flirtation has now turned into a full-fledged affair and it is incumbent on the new state governments to deliver and rise to the challenges, of which there are many.

Primarily, all state administrations must reflect the true composition of Malaysian society. The rot and corruption of the previous regimes must be exposed without fear or favour whilst those who have swindled the country of its wealth, be pursued vigorously. Only then will the voters feel assured that they made the correct choice in opting for change.

The election results show that Malaysians are no longer prepared to be taken for granted. We want our streets back, we want our personal freedoms back and we want accountability by those we have placed our trust in. We can no longer be bought with scraps, thrown at us by the ruling elite whilst they keep the nation's loot for themselves.

Malaysians have spoken with one voice in their desire for change and have shunned the racial politics so loved by those whose political survival depends on a divide and rule policy. We have sent a clear message that we will not allow either ourselves or our fellow

Malaysians to be intimidated with threats such as those made by the Prime Minister on the eve of the election.

Race and religion may always be a factor in the voting pattern of Malaysians but at least we can be proud to have finally buried the ghost of 1969.

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