

**Pak Lah - is he coming or going?**  
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Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi went to Sabah and promised to consider the possibility of more and better federal cabinet posts for not only that state but Sarawak as well. In Sarawak, Chief Minister Mahmud Taib earlier said they didn't ask for additional cabinet posts. If they didn't ask, why give? Again, must they ask first before you give?  
MCPX

Perhaps Taib is satisfied with his son having a deputy minister's post at the expense of the Bidayuh. Next, he will bring in his brother as well at the state level in preparation for his hinted, yet again, 'retirement'. Meanwhile, the three fellows publicly touted before as possible successors, watch from the sidelines, chewing on their you-know-what. The family keeps an iron grip on the Governor to prevent the head of state from choosing his own man for the chief minister's post.

That's how the Dayaks, despite having the largest number of seats in the state assembly, cannot put one of their people in the chief minister's chair even for a day. Already, they have been chopped up among so many parties, some of which keep getting de-registered one by one just when they seem to be going somewhere with their political organisation. Meanwhile, they continue to lose even more of their native land to the big plantation companies after having been left out from the timber industry. Taib has been around for so long, it's becoming embarrassing to explain away his continued presence on the scene.

Wan Mokhtar in Terengganu refused to go after 27 years and had to be thrown out lock, stock and barrel together with the BN at the 1999 polls. The electorate were not impressed with his oft cited Islamic credentials. They finally saw through his bluff. He was beaming with sheer joy, shamelessly on the verge of tears, when his son was fielded in the recent polls. He must have been lobbying day and night for it so that his family can get back into the business of politics. Is there enough left over from the 'wang ehsan' to go around?

Samy Vellu refused to go after 30 years and was thrown out together with the rest of the MIC leadership in the recent polls. After his loss, he told the press that all good things (taking crumbs from Umno to betray the Indians) must come to an end. He still refuses to go and continues to hang on to the MIC and now says he will go after one more term starting next year. Somebody should challenge him and throw him out. It's now or never Subra! Re-invent MIC and make it relevant with the times as the Malay Indian Chinese Party. Umno and MCA should follow suit.

Ling Liong Sik did a good thing for a spell by allowing Sarjit Singh with a Chinese mother in as a MCA member. So, we have this Punjabi banging away in Mandarin at MCA meetings and not feeling the slightest bit out of place.

Meanwhile, Abdullah said it will take time to allot the additional cabinet posts. Why does he need to take time? Is it another stalling tactic by him? Are Sabah and Sarawak in for a long wait, if at all, before they get the cabinet posts that have been promised? Or is he going to pawn them off with some Sharizat-style 'cabinet-level' government posts of no consequence?

Likewise, after the Hindraf demonstration, Abdullah said the government would set up a

high- powered committee to go through the Indian Malaysian demands and come up with a report within three months. When governments don't intend to do anything, they have meetings, set up committees, conduct studies, prepare reports, ask for memorandums or ask for more time to consider the possibility of considering.

In the very next sentence of his public statement, he asked Samy Vellu to give him a report. Samy said he submitted a report about a year ago - probably gathering dust somewhere if at all it was submitted (God alone knows) - but nevertheless promised to come up with a new report. Nothing at all in the media about the report having been done and submitted. All this looks like a sandiwara and wayang kulit. MIC members will tell you that Samy Vellu used to play the same sandiwara with his private secretary, Nettar, whenever they came to remind him of an earlier promise, still unfulfilled.

Samy would pretend to scold Nettar, the poor man, who would promptly apologise and promise to attend to things immediately. Of course, nothing ever materialised. Samy should have stuck to his drama career from his RTM days and not decided to squat on the Indian community through MIC. His arrogance with for the Indian community knows no bounds.

After the Hindraf demonstration, Abdullah said he had big ears and was willing to listen to anyone. The next day, he told the Hindraf 5 to see Samy Vellu. Why must they see Samy Vellu? Does he make the decisions? Is he the prime minister? Shortly after this, the Hindraf 5 were incarcerated under the draconian Internal Security Act (ISA) which belongs to the age of the political dinosaurs like Mahathir. Why the ISA? For refusing to see the worse than useless Samy Vellu who is only more keen on taking crumbs from Umno for himself and his inner circle in return for delivering the Indian votes en bloc like a slave to Umno/BN?

Abdullah is a man who certainly doesn't say what he means and doesn't mean what he says. That's because most of the time he doesn't know whether he's coming or going. This man is bad news for business, bad news for the economy, not even good news for religion despite his so-called Islamic credentials. That's the con card that Wan Mokhtar used for so many decades.

The economic corridors are a case in point. Abdullah has labeled organic economic growth activities already taking place quite for some time in certain areas as 'economic corridors'. This is simply a political gimmick like Mahathir's gimmick that Malaysia will emerge as a developed nation by the year 2020. True, Malaysia has the possibility of emerging as a developed nation someday, but that day wouldn't be in 2020. The economic growth rate figures speak for themselves. The inflation figures speak for themselves as well.

Some people cite the elections results but that is another story unless one is spinning political stories as a form of entertainment to compete with the re-runs on Astro.

The Umno-led BN government must accept the principle that the federal cabinet line-up must reflect the political reality of the election results, while mindful of the fact that all communities must be represented. Fifty-five of BN's 140 parliament seats are from Sabah and Sarawak. Abdullah can only ignore this at his own peril. Furthermore, MPs from Sabah and Sarawak should not continue to be pawned off with token representation for window dressing and relegated at the same time to minor ministries.

Sabah and Sarawak should be given their proper share of the federal government to give real and full meaning to the concept of Malaysia. At present, Umno like a compulsive gambler who has lost, is only obsessed with winning back the support of the Indian community in 64 of the 67 so-called 'Indian parliament seats' while wooing others as well.

Why close the stable doors in Peninsular Malaysia after the 'Indian horses' have bolted? Now, the stable has no horses to be prevented from bolting.

The BN should close the stable doors in Borneo to prevent its horses in Sabah and Sarawak from bolting and bolt they will before mid-December this year. Anwar, eligible for polls after April 15, can stand in a by-election after mid-September since six months must lapse from a general election before a by-election can be held. The King, who appears to be a reformer (I didn't just make that up), is not likely to assent to new general elections. Sorry, Pak Lah, no luck there.

What can we say in defence of poor Badawi? Of course, this is all the result of pickling the head too much in religion and having too little of the things that really matter, like economics and common sense, for example. But is there anything at all that we can say in favour of this bumbling old fool, mumbling to himself most of the time when he's not being incoherent in public?

Suffice it to say that all over the world, when the politics mature, no one party or a combination of parties can hope to win more than a third to 40 percent of the legislature. That's why you have hung parliaments everywhere. Governments fall like ten pins. Italy is an example. If Mahathir had still been the leader, he probably would have got much less than Abdullah, or even worse, failed to get a majority. Perhaps, he sensed this and got out while the going was good.

Now, he's claiming that Abdullah destroyed Umno and the BN. In fact, every organisation contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Umno and BN were headed for doom the moment they were formed. It was only a matter of time. Umno was headed for irrelevance the moment it rejected Onn Jaffar's call to open the doors of the party to non-Malays. This is the nearest that Umno has to a political ideology.

It's unnatural to continue to get a two-thirds majority or more in Parliament every time. Think of the embarrassment. Even Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Mahathir's bosom pal, couldn't manage it. So, sooner or later it had to come. No more two-thirds. Now, it has happened. The two-thirds is history, and not a moment too soon.

Of course, we know that Mahathir is out there. A bunch of sore losers are behind him. Bla, bla, bla in between bouts of selective amnesia. So, what else is new? What is Mahathir rooting for? He's in fact rooting for the discredited policy of Umnoputraism a la NEP. Where did the inspiration for Malaysia's Ketuanan Melayu and Umnoputraism a la NEP come from? From the infamous caste system of India!

If Umno listens to Mahathir, it will really become irrelevant. My best advice to Abdullah, since he's the best of the worst until Wan Azizah takes over as PM, is this: keep the doors open, give a hearing to all, and keep the lines of communication open. If he can do this, Mahathir will really be history. He doesn't have to respond to Mahathir who himself is a shameless although he accuses everybody else of being shameless.