

No need for powerful PM with a strong rakyat
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After 22 years of a government led by a powerful and domineering prime minister, Malaysia, under the present prime minister's fractious tenure, has at last entered the age of maturity with the citizens (MCPX rakyat) having a greater say in the government of this country.

(Of course, Ahmad Abdullah Badawi needed a wake-up call to finally prove his reformist credentials). This change in the country's political consciousness was not achieved overnight on March 8, 2008 but after two decades of disillusionment and outrage over the many injustices that have happened before our eyes and ears.

But now that the rakyat, through the ballot box, has elected more elected representatives who will stand for their rights and their interests. Do we really need another powerful prime minister (whether from the incumbent Barisan Nasional or from Pakatan Rakyat) in office?

Once the political system and the judiciary are cleaned up and reformed to become more transparent and accountable institutions, what we then need are smart, wise and responsible leaders who are able to steer the country out of the past and into a new future of mutual cooperation and global competitiveness.

Racial harmony is a piece of cake as long as you get everyone to see the reality that the economic pie will shrink in five years' time if the government is still hung up on interfering with market incentives.

The new status quo after the 12th landmark elections is not political instability (contrary to what London's Financial Times would have us believe). Neither is it whether Najib Razak, Tengku Razaleigh or Anwar Ibrahim will be the next PM.

The new status quo which every Malaysian citizen has to realise is that Malaysia today no longer needs a strongman to lead her.

In fact, the emergence of another powerful leader who steamrolls his way through the wishes of the citizens will be an unmitigated disaster, leading to more resistance from the rakyat and ultimately real political turmoil.

Just look around across the region. Notice that strongman leaders such as Suharto, Lee Kuan Yew, Mahathir and the old Thaksin are all rulers of a bygone age.

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