

One recent no-confidence motion against the prime minister was dismissed by the speaker on the grounds that the world would think that “he was the most stupid speaker in the world” if he allowed the motion to proceed.

bar council debate on judicial commission 250407 nazri abd aziz This was after Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department, Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz, gave the government’s position on the matter daily from different angles by labeling the resolution as just “plain rubbish” and “what kind of resolution is this?”, “there’s nothing in the standing rules that allows a resolution of this kind” and “with the government party having a majority of seats in Parliament, this kind of resolution should not be allowed”.

It’s a no-win situation. The message to the speaker from the government was clear.

Malaysia, in that sense, has presented itself as an idea at odds with itself: a nation-within-a-nation, the Malays, caught in a totalitarian straightjacket from womb-to-tomb, while another half, co-exists peacefully as a functioning anarchy of democracy for the non-Malays.

Non-Malays have any number of political parties representing them, the greater the split, the easier the ‘divide and rule’ becomes to shut out the non-Malay elite aspiring to lead the nation, an unthinkable notion given the conventional Malay political wisdom of Ketuanan Melayu (Malay political supremacy and dominance).

The possibility that the Malays in their collective wisdom would choose a non-Malay leader is a possibility not even considered by the ruling Malay elite in their worldview, although it may not be far from the Malay consciousness.

Malays must swear by the quasi-religious Umno with those in the tiny Malay opposition confined to just one viable choice for so long: PAS of the Islamists, an early breakaway from Umno.

Now, there is another breakaway: Parti Keadilan Rakyat of the young and tiny Malay middle class – an incidental by-product of the New Economic Policy from the years 1970 to 1990.

PKR, however, is a party under daily siege and its leader, fallen angel Anwar Ibrahim, beset with numerous challenges in and out of court.

Semangat 46, another breakaway earlier in the late 1980s, was eventually wooed back to the mother party after its failure in the battle for votes.

PKR, meanwhile, is no Semangat 46 and has in fact, in alliance with its partners in the opposition – PAS, DAP and Hindraf – picked up a credible 82 seats in Parliament at the March 8 election and wrested four of the richest states in Malaysia away from the BN – Selangor, Perak, Penang and rice bowl Kedah – and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. In addition, PAS retained its traditional spiritual and political stronghold in Kelantan.

An enslaved mindset

The game plan this time, a re-run of an earlier plan ten years ago, may be to put away Anwar Ibrahim for a longer stretch unless he can be persuaded to go away into political exile and allow his movement for reformation to collapse for eventual re-absorption by Umno.

The Malay collective mindset enslaved by the Umno ruling elite resides in all branches of the government and in its linkages with the ruling party apparatus.

Déjà vu? Anwar has not made it any easier for himself either by pledging to wrest the reins of the federal government in Putrajaya by Sept 16, Malaysia Day, a significant day for Malaysian Borneo which provides more than a third of the current government's strength in Parliament.

anwar ibrahim exclusive pre permatang pauh interview 130808 07 Mahathir was single-handedly responsible for the rise of the reformasi (reformation) movement exploding onto the streets when he not only sacked Anwar as his deputy but expelled him as the Umno number two the very next day and had him incarcerated for 15 years, as it subsequently transpired at the appeals stage, on allegedly trumped up charges of sodomy and corruption.

He was even denied bail during the nine-month trial and made the daily trek to the court from jail.

Mahathir's formula for securing a conviction from an emasculated judiciary, after bringing the entire machinery of government to bear down on upon one man, was simple: he repeated daily to a compliant press from various angles that Anwar was a sodomist and guilty as charged.

He was even creative in the details and the telling, claiming to know many details not made public. The message to the sitting judge was clear: Get Anwar.

The corruption charges were academic by the time Anwar was released upon appeal, after Mahathir's departure from office, but not before he had languished six years in jail in a state of semi-paralysis from a bad back amidst complaints that he was denied proper medical treatment.

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