

Anwar's ascendancy a return of power for rakyat
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Steve Oh

Just when many Malaysians are resigned to another ho-hum Merdeka holiday, the Permatang Pauh by-election has given them cause to celebrate. The predicted win by Anwar Ibrahim has given a new meaning to the notion of Merdeka.
MCPX

Anwar's re-entry into parliament and eventual role as the nation's leader will be a watershed event in the country's political history. It may yet prove to be as significant as that auspicious day on Aug 31, 1957 when the crowd saw the late Tunku Abdul Rahman punch his fist into the air to the reverberating chants of 'Merdeka!'

If the Tunku is Bapa Malaysia then Anwar is Bapa Reformasi. His downfall and jailing on trumped up charges in 1998 proved the silver lining. Had Anwar gone on to become prime minister without his troubles it may have been a different story.

But I believe man proposes and God disposes.

It was never meant for Anwar to be Mahathir the Second, for the days of strongmen leaders using strong-arm tactics must be over.

Let us remind ourselves that Malaysia is a democracy not a dictatorship and those who are guilty of sedition are those who govern like dictators, not those who try to save their country from going to the dogs.

We don't want another two decades of political and civil decadence and squandered opportunities.

Providence saw a benign successor to Dr Mahathir Mohammed, who scripted Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in the role of his lapdog. However the man turned out to be his own boss and that infuriated his former boss.

Hell knows no fury like Mahathir scorned and with no holds barred, the former premier has attacked his successor with the fury of a tropical typhoon, though apparently to no avail.

No one doubts Mahathir still wields influence but not enough to return to power or to make the difference anymore. Anwar's rise will be the nail in Mahathir's political coffin.

Let us hope that years in the political wilderness and personal suffering will have prepared Anwar to lead the country along a new and enlightened path where governance is not a pretext for selfish gain and personal ambitions but a means to serve the people without fear or favour, and that he will have a better insight into the plight of those who have suffered injustice.

No one knows the future's script. But it is easy to foretell that there is no future for those who still cling to old ways and perpetrate corruption and evil. In fifty years, Malaysians have seen their country diminish in moral stature despite once boasting of having the tallest structures in the world and recently having sent one of its own into space.

Sadly the establishment failed to read the cue after March 8 and the sodomy charge against Anwar and subsequent events have only further eroded their credence.

In sober moments, PM Abdullah Ahmad Badawi may reflect on the lost opportunities. Politics owes no citizen the guarantee of permanent tenure. The rakyat dealt Abdullah a good hand in 2004 but he squandered it.

Some say his hands were tied but so were those in Pakatan Rakyat, and even more so Anwar's. If there is a will there is a way. Umno politicians have run out of ideas, twenty years of dominance by one man has all but deprived the party of those who would have served their country better.

Anwar's ascendancy must also be a return of power to the rakyat, a reinstatement of all that has been lost in the past few decades - the loss of independence in the judiciary, the lack of professionalism in the police force and other law-enforcing agencies and a return to the original notion of nationhood where every Malaysian is equal under the rule of law.

Whoever runs the show must realise that governance is all about the welfare of all the rakyat - not the interests of the esoteric circle and its political patrons. Sadly, a misguided nationalism feeding on ignorance, bigotry and fear, has resulted in the moral bankruptcy of the status quo. The old must go, the new must come.

Malaysia has yet to see what it can achieve when the nation functions not only according to the Merdeka declaration but the true spirit of nationhood where race, religion and other differences no longer matter, and every Malaysian feels proud of his nation and government and one another because what is good is honoured and what is corrupt is disdained and when those in government govern for all.

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