

BN on course for disaster
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It looks almost certain. The Umno-led Barisan Nasional government has lost the battle for the hearts and minds of the people.

With a string of political faux pas, the ruling coalition appears to have committed suicide in the arena of public perception.

Every miscalculated step is a boon for the opposition.

There is a wave of conversion sweeping through the realm of the fence-sitters and the inhabitants are choosing sides fast. Even the silent majority has discovered its voice and putting pen to paper to ink its dissatisfaction.

The once super-glued coalition is straining under the pressure and displays signs of crumbling like a house of cards. Members from the ground up are rumbling.

There is also confusion over who is calling the shots. Is Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi still pushing the buttons or is this the work of hidden hands?

The ISA debacle

The latest debacle involving the arrest of three people, including a journalist, under the Internal Security Act is seen by many as another nail in the coffin.

isa 3 teresa raja petra tan hoon cheng Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar ensured that the nail was hammered well into the wood when he revealed that the journalist was detained for her own good, a justification which even his colleagues found absurd.

The Chinese language journalist's safety was apparently under threat following her report which highlighted the racial remarks made by Umno leader Ahmad Ismail which ignited a national uproar and culminated in the latter's suspension.

She was arrested on Friday night and released the next afternoon. It appears that the threat had abated in a matter of hours.

On the contrary, the journalist appears to be in greater danger now since the arrest turned her into somewhat of a celebrity with her photograph making the front-page of all major newspapers.

This would only make it easier for a vengeful 'Malay supremacist' or fanatical Ahmad Ismail supporter to identify the victim whose hitherto identity was simply a name written in Chinese characters.

The entire 'shoot the messenger' episode appears to be nothing more than another shot to the foot.

zaid ibrahim pc 110608 02 What makes it even more damaging is that Zaid Ibrahim - the

minister tasked with overseeing legal affairs - has come out in the open to condemn the ISA arrests and threatened to quit.

Since the powers-that-be, most notably the previous administration, invoked the draconian law to stifle dissent and prune political opponents, the national security excuse is no longer convincing, especially in the present era where every move by the ruling coalition is met with scepticism and suspicion.

As far as public perception is concerned, BN can no longer do anything right and the opposition, even if it genuinely falters, is a victim of a conspiracy hatched by its rivals.

Forget Sept 16

The March 8 general election had captured the imagination of Malaysians and the political wizard Anwar Ibrahim continues to weave his spell with the hope of becoming king.

And instead of applying the brakes on his grand ambition, BN appears to be accelerating this possibility and the throne could be handed to him on a silver platter.

Forget Sept 16 and hopping parliamentarians.

umno special briefing abdullah ahmad badawi announce resignation date 100708 05The manner in which things are unravelling, the ruling coalition looks determined to oust itself from power sooner or later, with or without the newly minted opposition leader's help.

Conveniently, the prime minister who made history twice in five years - biggest victory and biggest defeat - is blamed.

Abdullah might have many shortcomings but it cannot be denied that the premier is merely reaping what was sown by his predecessors. The pot had been simmering for a long time and Abdullah merely let it boil over during his tenure.

He is also on the verge of setting a third record, being the only prime minister to simultaneously face the threat of internal and external political coups.

Racial politics

The component parties, on the other hand, point the finger at their big brother Umno in an attempt to sidestep any responsibility or blame.

But racial politics did not appear overnight. It was planted and nurtured for decades right under the very noses of these component party leaders. Being proponents of such politics themselves, they saw no reason to protest when the sailing was smooth.

anwar ibrahim enters parliament building as mp 280808 10Now that the crew has spotted an iceberg and the fear of a collision has crept in, the captains are frantically trying to steer left and right, breaching the course charted by the mothership.

To make matters worse, the Black Pearl, with its intimidating skull and crossbones flag, is also lurking behind the rocks with its eyes firmly set on the treasure chest.

Should the ships manage to survive the collision and remain afloat, the damaged vessels will be no match for the cannons waiting to fire on the command of the renegade captain, Jack (Anwar) Sparrow.

mahathir kimma new office event 150708 03On the mothership, a mutiny is brewing. Some of the officers want the retired captain, who has an impressive track record of smashing icebergs to smithereens and disposing of pirates, to return.

Under his stewardship, the fleet had encountered little, if no, obstacles. But the situation is different now. Things have never looked so bleak.

One wonders whether even the impeccable captain would be able to steer his ships to safety as and unless drastic measures are employed, which in return could also prove to be a fatal error.

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