

**A time for heroes when 'tyranny' beckons**  
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It is probably a sign of our times that an event of national importance which took place in the holiest of Muslim months, brings nothing but the worst that all Malaysia has to offer.

This year's Merdeka went down into history as one that not all Malaysians looked forward to celebrating. Some blamed the haze and H1N1 for the damper in our National Day celebrations. Many refrained from flagging their ardour for Merdeka.

But the underlying reason to this is probably the general unhappiness amongst the *rakyat*. Many are asking if they are truly independent under the shadow of pre-Merdeka laws like the Internal security Act and an increasingly antagonistic and iron-fisted government.

Along with the delays by the government in reviewing the antiquated laws (claimed by many to be repressive) and having an indiscriminate police force which of late has been coming down heavily on public demonstrations (the recent being the arrests of the demonstrators of the peaceful Hindraf procession) it is no wonder that, and according to Dean Johns in a *Malaysiakini* column, the sombre mood at this year's National Day celebrations is meant to show silent civil disobedience, aimed at 'annoying' the BN government.

This is, in addition, to a list of other undemocratic acts such as the toppling of the democratically elected Perak government and the recently announced targeting of Selangor whose demise, according to premier and Umno president Najib Abdul Razak, is apparently in the making.

This year's National Day also happens to fall in the holy month of Ramadan, during which according to Muslim scriptures, Satan and his minions were chained up. However, we continue to experience merry-making of the kind often blamed on the whisperings of the Great Deceiver.

The infamous 'cow head' incident, for one, was perpetrated during the fasting month by supposedly devout Muslims, whose actions were anything but devout.

As the saying goes, humans have the capacity to transcend to being angels, though at times we behave worse than animals.

We seem to be heading into darker times, both grim and woeful but there is also a time of hope.

The definition of 'hero' according to Merriam-Webster's online dictionary is that of someone endowed with great strength or ability, admired for his achievements and noble qualities and shows great courage, usually in fighting for the public good. In popular context, 'hero' would generally refer to one who ends the reign of a tyrant - freeing society from its yoke of suffering.

A 'tyrant' is further defined as an absolute ruler unrestrained by law or constitution, one who usurps the sovereignty of a state, exercising its abuse of power through oppression and brutality.

As we move into our 52nd year of 'independence', we find ourselves in an age of 'tyranny', an occasion that screams out for a hero.

### **What Malaysians don't need**

But what kind of hero are we looking for? To answer that, let us begin by eliminating the kind of heroes that we are not looking for.

The hero we need is not an ex-menteri besar, whose Michael Jackson-like antics revolved not only around skin care but also the owner of a highly questionable 'Neverland' ranch-like palatial mansion and extended trips to a popular amusement park.

More so, if he is a figure steeped in allegations of corruption and stands accused of interfering with official state investigations. As one who lost his seat in the last election, he should have gone down in history with the likes of Tajol Rosli Mohd Ghazali (who lost his Perak seat) rather than stay on unashamed and continue to make a public (albeit tyrannical) spectacle of himself.

The hero we need is not a minister who does not know which Hindu organisation he is dealing with, as in the case of the recent cow-head controversy and who seems to be showing favouritism in a case his ministry is "monitoring for the PM". We also do not need a minister who apparently flip-flops over major decisions as easily as wind rustling through the willows.

We also certainly do not need a minister who has conveyed ill-intentional messages through the 'symbolic' wielding of a ritual weapon in public and who continues with his off-the-cuff handling of the same issue. [If only some of the metal of the said weapon would infuse his spine].

The hero we need is not a prime minister who seems more concerned with scheming over state take-overs (lost in last year's democratic elections) instead of solving other woes more vital to an already deteriorating situation in the country. A 'command from behind' politician who sends 'others' (read his deputy) into muddy puddles so that his shoes won't be soiled.

And certainly not one whose vanity demands that the theme song of the movie 'Rocky' be played at his entrance into his 100th day-in-office celebrations and whose concept of 1Malaysia is still, to this day, not fully understood nor explained.

### **What Malaysians need**

The hero we need, is someone who is as enthusiastic as our transport minister in fighting corruption, whose recent probe exposed the 'redirection' of billions from public coffers. Although not short of skeletons in his own closet as he has been accused of 'misdirecting' some cash into his own coffers, as well as purging rivals from his own party through the use of corruption probes, it would be someone who will expose the graft in our governance.

The hero we need, is a person of great moral courage and a sense of personal honour, like a certain ex-health minister who possessed the courage to admit his wrongdoing and the honour to own up to it.

While he may not be the shining example of an upright politician, he has been the only one to resign when confronted with such a scandal. Many of our politicians however, hang on to power for dear life despite suspicions and convictions. Malacca plays host to two such

controversial menteri besar.

The hero we want, is probably like Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who has the conviction to lead and is not afraid to take accountability for his actions although we probably would not want to return to the Mahathir era, for obvious reasons.

But honour, courage, accountability and the desire to fight corruption is not something that one would normally expect of a politician.

Even the newly-elected Pakatan Rakyat representatives are finding it hard to keep to those values and adjust to being in power. As temptations reach out to them, the realities of governing are being felt.

Perhaps the hero we need is not an individual but a collective spirit of heroism. In the end, the hero we want does not need be a lone gunman who sets things right, but a resurgence of heroism in all of us to withstand 52 years of inertia and strike out on our own self-determined path.

While the so called 'political tsunami' of the last general election served as a 'wake-up' call, what we need now is a complete rejection of our self-appointed 'tyrants'.

Heroism in the ballot box will accompany bravery in the act of demonstrations.

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