

Hell Hath No Fury Like Mahathir Scorned
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Former Prime minister Mahathir Mohamed cannot have much to do these days, apart from fomenting political unrest and stirring-up racial tensions in the rakyat. He was the one who perfected the technique of using race and religion to create divisions in Malaysians and today's new breed of thinking Malaysians, who are no longer servile, are a threat to Mahathir and his ilk.

It is widely known that Mahathir had groomed Anwar Ibrahim to be his successor in the nineties and was furious when his deputy challenged his leadership in the Asian financial crisis and refused to bail out companies belonging to his family and his cronies.

Mahathir had to seek revenge and assure a continuation of his political dynasty through his son. To accuse Anwar of infidelity would not have been effective. Just about every other Malay man is in some form of extramarital or polygamous relationship.

To charge Anwar with corruption would also have been to no avail. Just about every other Umno/BN politician is involved in some form of financial irregularity.

How convenient then that homosexual acts such as sodomy are banned in Islam and abhorred by most Malays, especially we are told, the rural Malay.

So what must former Prime minister Mahathir Mohamed have felt when in 1998, Anwar's trial, infamously dubbed Sodomy I was overturned. Fast forward to 2012, if he felt that his wish would be granted and that Anwar would be charged in Sodomy II, Mahathir was again disappointed.

Yesterday, Mahathir criticised those people who did not want Saiful Bukhari Azlan and his family to ask the attorney-general to appeal Anwar's acquittal on Jan 9.

Mahathir then questioned if the opposition coalition agreed with Anwar's advocacy of gay rights, despite the fact that Anwar has never advocated gay rights.

The gay rights issue had come up in a BBC interview with Anwar, soon after his acquittal. A BBC reporter had reportedly asked Anwar about anti-discriminatory laws on gays and he had allegedly replied "we will have to review some of our archaic laws."

Mahathir wrote in his blog: "Has it also become one of Pakatan's struggles now, as what was suggested by Anwar in the BBC, that the country's laws have become obsolete and should be amended so that sodomy is legalised according to the liberal laws of the West?"

Utusan Malaysia, the Umno mouthpiece, had twisted the BBC interview with Anwar and published a front-page story titled "Anwar ulas isu gay" (Anwar discusses gay rights).

As if settling old scores, Mahathir then used these to denigrate Anwar's character and claimed that Pakatan, under Anwar's leadership was proposing to legalise sodomy.

Fresh from being expelled from PAS, the former Selangor PAS commissioner Dr Hasan Ali criticised Anwar claiming that his view on gay rights was why he could not work with the opposition leader and told Malaysians to reject Anwar.

He said, "Because if gays, lesbians, homosexuals and transsexuals are legalised (sic) in Malaysia, God forbid, I think Malaysia will be in disarray and chaos."

Members of the opposition coalition were quick to defend Anwar and stressed that he never wanted to legalise homosexuality but only wanted to review unIslamic laws.

PKR religious bureau chief Ahmad Kassim said, "He was of the opinion that archaic laws which are not according to syariah principles and which oppress Malaysians, should be reviewed."

Jumping onto the bandwagon to slag Anwar, was Information, Communications and Culture Minister Rais Yatim who said that he agreed with "The Economist" which claimed Anwar's reputation was tarnished despite his acquittal.

The Economist wrote that although Anwar "remains a charismatic figure and a forceful speaker, his reputation has been tarnished".

The article added that this "won't matter to Anwar acolytes, but at 64 he also seems a distant and untrustworthy figure to many younger Malaysians".

At a recent lecture given by Anwar at University College London, a Malay scholarship student in his early twenties said that he and his peers were surprised to read that Anwar was once an active student leader and that he had been arrested for protesting against rural poverty. However, they were more shocked to learn that he had once been the deputy prime minister.

Political pundits were quick to point out that many younger Malaysians only know Anwar through the sodomy trials, perhaps as a direct result of Umno/BN propaganda efforts.

Others claim that Mahathir will have a strong influence on media reporting and Anwar will have been portrayed in a very negative light.

Mahathir is not happy that Anwar appears to have the upper hand right now. The attorney-general will probably be ordered to appeal in Sodomy II.

Anwar leading the opposition into Putrajaya does not auger well for Mahathir and those in Umno/BN who have benefitted from his patronage. Mahathir will not want to see Anwar as Prime minister of Malaysia and that is why he thinks Anwar must be stopped without fail.

Mahathir does not care if Malaysia is dragged through the filth and made the laughing stock of the world. He thinks nothing of belittling our intelligence. He has no worries about wasting taxpayers' money and time on the appeal.

Most of all, Mahathir believes that people like Saiful Bukhari Azlan and his family are expendable pawns in his power struggle with his one-time deputy who dared challenge his fiscal policies and his corrupt deals.

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