

**PM Must Debate With PM-In-Waiting**  
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With the just concluded political debate between MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng, we have crossed the Rubicon. There is no turning back from this kind of debate in the future.

Malaysians will look forward to such debates so that political parties can be consistent in their policies and statements. What is stated nationally through such TV debates will remain as the official policy of the political parties.

This will, indeed, put a stop to politicians adopting different stances when they address different communities. The former prime minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, had accused Anwar Ibrahim of being a Chinese when addressing the Chinese and an ulamak when speaking to the Malays. There have been similar claims of duplicity when Umno politicians speak to different communities.

This has to stop if we are trying to forge a nation based on mutual respect for one another and to co-exist as a harmonious community dedicated to the welfare of Malaysia. It is all the more necessary to dispel suspicion by speaking honestly without adopting different stances.

This is only possible if everyone has access to the policies of the political parties through nationally televised debates. Nobody can speak with a forked tongue after such debates.

It is, therefore, very crucial for the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister-in-waiting to meet face to face in a nationally televised debate to state their respective positions. In today's politics, a two-party system is surely emerging and it is imperative to listen to these two leaders.

Anwar has already challenged Najib to have a debate with him. He has publicly thrown down the gauntlet and it is left to Najib to take up the gauntlet. That is the only honourable thing to do.

Najib cannot avoid this debate especially when Anwar is even prepared to give the prime minister extra time to put forward his position and to reply to the opposition leader. It will not reflect well on the Prime Minister and the Barisan Nasional if Najib refuses to debate Anwar.

This is a much-awaited debate and Malaysians have a right to expect this debate to take place. This will definitely put a stop to the unhealthy political game of speaking differently to different communities and deliberately distorting the views of the other party.

The ball is in the Prime Minister's court.

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