

Keeping it real going into the second year

TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad's 5/10 evaluation of his Cabinet is keeping it real.

There will be no thumping of the chest from the Prime Minister to repeat over and over the glory of Pakatan Harapan wresting Putrajaya from Barisan Nasional after 60 years.

In its first year since the historic 14th General Election upset on May 9, 2018, Dr Mahathir had gone down to work by hitting the ground running.

His Cabinet is formed from former opposition leaders who have no experience on how to run the country.

The Prime Minister admitted that along the way, some ministers had fumbled and others had made bad decisions.

This led to speculation that Dr Mahathir would be reshuffling his

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Says**

Cabinet as part of his to-do list after one year into his administration.

The names of at least three ministers were frequently being bandied around as those who would be getting the axe.

In a group media interview in conjunction with Pakatan's first anniversary as the government on Monday, Dr Mahathir made it clear which ministers he wants with him to run the country in the second year of Pakatan's leadership.

"There will be no Cabinet reshuffle" he insists.

"I don't see any reason why I

need to."

And, when asked, he gave his Cabinet a five out of 10 for performance.

They are new, he said, compared to him who has been in government for 22 years.

Dr Mahathir went on to admit that some ministers had tripped and "done something without consulting me that should not be done - and creating minor problems and all that".

His 5/10 pronouncement for his Cabinet can also be seen as a mirror of how the public feels the "new Malaysia" has fared in the past year. There are accolades given to Pakatan for its efforts to introduce institutional reforms and to check corruption.

Dr Mahathir feels the fight against corruption is bearing fruit.

He counts it as an achievement

because today, people don't complain so much about alleged demands from government officers for extra payment.

More importantly, approvals for proposals are given out faster.

The Prime Minister also counted as a success that the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) is on track again after 11 months of reworking the financial deal with China, and how the government has tackled the financial fiasco involving Tabung Haji as well as Felda.

But dropping approval ratings show voters are impatient for things that matter most to them - the bread and butter issue.

The big complaint has been that the change to the SST from GST has not resulted in big savings.

Yes. The government will collect around RM20bil less in taxes from what it could under the GST, but

that has not allayed the cost of living concerns.

Maybe it's because of new taxes being introduced or the sentiment issue. Also not helping with the perception of Pakatan is the weaker economy, which has been a drag for the government.

The economy is projected to grow by between 4.3% and 4.8% this year, and the stock market and the ringgit have not performed well.

It is not as bad as it's made out to be as the stock market and the ringgit did not fall much last year. However, the government should be mindful that any fall will be amplified.

The one silver lining going forward is the economy is projected to pick up in the second half of this year, and maybe that will help with the perception of the government.