

# CABINET RESHUFFLE IS A MUST

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PAHIT MANIS



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It's just a question of time before Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad reshuffles his cabinet. FILE PIC

**H**OW many of today's ministers will survive when the prime minister reshuffles his cabinet? Apart from the ministers themselves, many others are watching and waiting in anticipation.

In all seriousness, I believe Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will reshuffle his cabinet. It's just a question of time. His team has been around enough, and many of us have our own impression of each and every one of them.

Reshuffling will not only mean moving the ministers to different portfolios. It also means replacing them with new personalities. And judging from the (lack of) performances of quite a number of them, more than a couple of heads will roll.

I'd be too happy to list the inept ones. But Dr Mahathir has better information on his colleagues — whether they perform, play tru-

ant or are just downright incapable of doing their job. Let him sit quietly and decide. He has already made his assessment. We will just wait.

Dr Mahathir is no fool, and I believe he also tolerates no fool. Calls for the prime minister to drop some of his colleagues have been heard before. It's not new. A few weeks or months after the cabinet was fully formed, Dr Mahathir knew who could really work, who are the pretenders, who's the real deal and who's not.

He gave everyone enough time to prove their worth. He wasn't expecting all of them to shine, but he wasn't expecting them to be complete failures either. A few of the ministers appear to be clueless about the task before them.

We all hear stories about a few ministers not getting along with

senior civil servants in their ministries. These stories have been passed around by senior staff members, making them credible. One minister even thought about quitting, but decided to have another go at his job.

This column had called for the prime minister to replace the non-performers much earlier. Of course, the man won't do it. That's his trademark style. He won't reshuffle his cabinet just because so-and-so said so.

If we expect any bungling minister to submit his or her letter of resignation, then I suggest we manage our expectations — that's not going to happen. A culture of ministers offering to step down for being ineffective is not the DNA here.

The appointment of a cabinet minister is the sole prerogative of the prime minister and no one else. You can give ideas and suggestions, but at the end of the day, the prime minister decides alone.

A couple of nights ago, Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng was seen on television talking about the possibility of a cabinet reshuffle. Lim said the matter had not been discussed. Lim is correct.

I don't see the need for Dr Mahathir to consult such appointments with anyone other than key party leaders in Pakatan Harapan. Even then, it would be more of a formality and as a matter of courtesy. He may ask for views, but the decision is his alone.

Lim knows that the appointment of a cabinet minister is the

sole prerogative of the prime minister. It is hoped that the changes can bring about fresh ideas, creativity and a sense of urgency in the portfolios they are assigned to.

Many of us would want to see some bold changes being made. A party insider said he wanted to see Dr Mahathir be brutal when making these changes. I sense quite a number of PH party insiders and stalwarts are disenchanted with their colleagues in the cabinet.

Truth be told, the disenchantment of the rakyat cuts across the political divide. The people are unhappy not only with some PH elected representatives, they are also unhappy with those from the opposition.

A near-empty Dewan Rakyat seen a few days ago speaks volumes about the commitment of our wakil rakyat.

They fought hard to get into Parliament, and then ditched us just like that.

That's pure rubbish, Mr Member of Parliament. You should be ashamed of yourselves! Many of our MPs easily forget who their boss is.

We can't expect them to be in Parliament every single day. Being absent from the sessions makes a mockery of the august house and their role as wakil rakyat.

Which brings us to the Tanjung Piai by-election last week. Barisan Nasional's candidate from MCA, Datuk Wee Jeck Seng, wrested the seat from PH with a

handsome majority — a clear rejection of the coalition and its policies.

And we were treated to a picture of Wee being sworn in to an empty hall. Wee's victory is being analysed over and over again. A 15,086-vote majority is plain evidence that PH is facing a clear and present danger to its position.

Of course, one swallow does not make a summer. We all know that politics is a game of numbers and perceptions.

The perception today is that many PH leaders, especially those holding government positions, are still struggling with their new-found authority.

Remember the executive councillor from Melaka who asked people around him: "You YB *ka saya* YB (Are you YB or am I YB)?"

Tanjung Piai was a clear manifestation of the voters' displeasure with PH. It showed very clearly that the coalition had failed miserably to hold on to the voters who polled for it in the last general election.

We must also realise the presence of embattled BN leaders Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi was not the key factor in his victory.

Wee won because the voters rejected PH. Period.

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	SUBUH (am)	SYURUK	ZUHUR	ASAR (pm)	MAGHRIB	ISYAK
Melaka	5:37	6:58	1:00	4:23	6:59	8:12
Penang	5:49	7:08	1:07	4:29	7:02	8:15
K. Lumpur	5:42	7:00	1:02	4:25	7:00	8:13
Johor Bahru	5:30	6:51	12:54	4:17	6:54	8:07
Kuantan	5:35	6:56	12:57	4:19	6:55	8:08
Ipoh	5:46	7:04	1:05	4:27	7:01	8:14