

He is heavy and nobody's bro

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EXCEPT for Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak's diehards and political opportunists, the rest of Malaysia is likely to have heaved a sigh of relief when the appellate court upheld the High Court's decision of finding the former prime minister (PM) guilty of criminal breach of trust, money laundering and abuse of power.

No doubt that there is still the Federal Court to contend with, but as of now, a total of four judges have unequivocally decided that Najib is guilty as charged.

But that is not going to be the closing chapter of the Najib saga.

In fact, given the impressive delaying-tactic skills Najib and his defence team had shown, even before proceedings could commence at both the High Court and Court of Appeal, the nation can expect it is going to be an extended period before some sort of closure can be found.

So, as much as many celebrated the upholding of Najib's conviction on Wednesday, the stay of execution meant that he will continue to strut and preen, and living up to his "Bossku", the boss, moniker unashamedly.

The Court of Appeal judges' declaration of him being a national

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embarrassment is not going to get him red-faced and much less to stumble in his tracks.

Neither is the decision sufficient to "turn over" Najib's supporters, especially when he has embarked on a "two wrongs make one right" campaign in the public sphere.

Furthermore, Najib had in the past showed how nonchalant he can be even when headlined as a Plundering Idiot, Man of Steal and the Sleaziest Ex-Prime Minister and instead, proceeded to rally his supporters to herald him as a saviour of the poor and downtrodden.

If one half of the nation is convinced that Najib is a felon and should be incarcerated, the other half is divided — not necessarily equally — one part believing he is innocent and a political victim, while the other accepts that he had committed some wrongs but his good outweighs them.

And this half is adamant, so much so that even Najib's own brother Tan Sri Nazir Razak, had joined the chorus line of exposing Najib's shenanigans when he was the PM, including the 1MDB (1Malaysia Development Bhd) scandal.

This has now led to a situation when the supporters are unable to differentiate between Robin Hood and robbing the hood.

But these supporters are not the only ones to blame for the infamy that Najib has placed the nation and its inability to move forward.

Of equal blame is Umno and to a certain degree, Barisan Nasional (BN) and Perikatan Nasional (PN), as well as PM Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

Umno, BN and Ismail Sabri are all complicit because they do not have the gumption nor the moral courage to extricate themselves from Najib, though they are very much aware of him and the other kleptocrats being liabilities. Instead, they pander to him, hoping to cash in on his perceived substantial following and probably unaware that the following is because of their pandering.

They did not make the effort to distance themselves or remove him when he was a liability in the pre-2018 polls and not now when he is going to be a liability in the next polls.

Ismail Sabri's preparedness to show reverence to Najib may be done strictly for political survivability and an extended stay at Seri Perdana. But that

doesn't say much of his leadership nor commitment in combating the corruption scourge, which taint is a tad more on Umno than any other BN parties.

There are opinions that such attitude is shrewd on his part as allowing the court process to take its natural course, meaning if the courts found Najib guilty (and party president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi who is also facing dozens of financial related cases), Ismail Sabri would naturally inherit the party top post without alienating supporters of the duo.

If, by some minute possibility, they escape from being incarcerated, Ismail Sabri remains in situ, the No 3 and the leading contender to take over.

For PN, its preparedness to collaborate with Najib and the court cluster in pursuit of positions and glory only lasted for 17 months, which saw their leader Tan Sri Mahiaddin Md Yassin being unceremoniously ousted and humiliated.

It also gave Najib and the court cluster a lifeline, which saw them installing Ismail Sabri as PM and leaving him indebted for a shot at the coveted post.

Contributing further to the dilemma is of course PAS, despite wearing the Islamic credentials on its sleeve, seemed somewhat ambivalent if not outrightly tolerant of the financial shenanigans of the Umno kleptocrats.

Very much like the current crop of non-kleptocratic Umno leaders, the PAS leaders too were ambivalent over the expose of the wrongdoings in 1MDB before the 2018 general election and in fact formed an electoral pact with the then Najib-led Umno. And these very self-proclaimed guardians of Islam decided to formalised their collaboration with Umno by inking the Muafakat Nasional (MN) post-2018 and postured as the ultimate Malay Islam unity.

Today, the MN, once celebrated as a union made in heaven, suffers egotistical differences and promises a hellish end. But the mullahs remain ambivalent about kleptocracy and corruption. With that, Najib and his self-serving agenda persist to disrupt.

And the nation stays trapped in the temporal loop of ignominy.