

# OF WET BLANKETS AND SOUR GRAPES

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**I**N the aftermath of the bruising 15th General Election, two items are not in short supply under the current rainy weather — wet blankets and sour grapes.

Wet blankets are a common sight when floodwaters rise quickly to inundate homes. And sour and tangy grapes may sometimes be found among the many varieties flooding our market thanks to this year's bumper harvests in Australia and New Zealand.

A wet blanket can also refer to someone who spoils the enjoyment of others in a celebration, or someone who dampens other people's joy.

This expression started around the 1870s, when cooks at that time kept wet blankets in the kitchen to smother fires that were accidentally started.

As for sour grapes, the term refers to the negative attitude towards something adopted by people because they cannot have it for themselves. It's derived from one of the many fables by ancient Greek storyteller Aesop entitled "The Fox and the Grapes".

In the story, a thirsty fox sees a bunch of plump juicy grapes hanging high from a vine, but fails in all its attempts to get hold of it.

Feeling dejected, the fox walks away without ever tasting the



DATUK  
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grapes while trying hard to convince himself by muttering: "I am sure they are sour." The moral of the fable is, it is easy to despise what you cannot get.

As I examined these two expressions, they are against an intriguing backdrop of a few politicians from the same fold, who poured scorn on the ability (or the lack of it) of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to steer the country towards a better future.

Strangely, these "has-beens" had lost badly in the recent polls besides having their election deposits forfeited, a stark indication of how badly they performed. They have little locus standi, and their time has passed, so to speak.

These "Doubting Thomases" said they had no confidence in Anwar's leadership and that the latter was only good in mouthing populist statements.

While the current government had stated it's untrue that it could not be criticised, and constructive criticisms were always welcomed, it's certainly not open season for detractors to simply criticise the administration.

It's now 2022 going on to 2023, and not 1981 or 1998. To borrow a line from John Lennon and Yoko



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Ono — give peace a chance — and do give this newly-stitched government a chance.

Anwar's cabinet is hardly a month old, and even much less for the second echelon of deputy ministers. It's heart-warming that some of them had even taken the lead for quick wins in a matter of days for the people's benefit.

The government's apparatus is not just Anwar's alone. He has many competent people around him who want to prove the sceptics wrong.

That said, Anwar has to be strong enough to face the world each day and also weak enough to admit that he cannot do everything alone.

Anwar has proven his mettle by reaffirming the confidence of support for him on Dec 19. It spoke volumes of his skilful behind-the-scene manoeuvrings.

His true friends have made their support felt in times of need when others seemed to have vanished.

The *South China Morning Post*, which tracks Malaysia's political developments closely, ran an uplifting editorial recently with the headline: "Anwar is the right leader to put Malaysia back on the right track".

It opined that the outcome of the electoral impasse could be positive for the country, which now has a multiracial govern-

ment led by a prime minister with Islamic credentials when it comes to fending off extremists.

The SCMP said despite intense distractions of coalition politics and potential racial agitation by the opposition, Malaysia is poised for greater stability and economic development!

Give the government some latitude first.

We can scrutinise its scorecard when it hits the 100-day mark. In the meantime, let's not upset the apple cart without rhyme or reason.

The writer is a business journalist and the former chief executive of national news agency Bernama