



On the beat

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IT'S infinitely unnerving when politicians rely on a combination of race and religious issues to garner support.

Social media is littered with videos of these politicians dangerously peddling their lethal and toxic sentiments to push their desperate agendas.

Unfortunately, these tactics appear to have worked for certain parties, as evidenced by the votes in the recent 15th General Election (GE15).

It may seem preposterous but there's certainly a market for such toxic stories, buyers of which, tragically, include young voters.

The majority of Undi18 votes, unfortunately, went to those who advocated hard-line religious practices.

Ironically, one of the prime movers of Undi18, Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, nearly lost his seat.

It's one thing to attack corrupt politicians and suggest an alternative, but the treacherous level it has degenerated to is an entirely different prospect.

From promising a passage to heaven to Jewish plots and an alleged Chinese-led unity govern-

A new dawn begins

You can't please everyone all the time, but Malaysia has, at least, resolution and a way forward now.

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Unity in diversity: Anwar displaying a list of new Cabinet members on Friday night. The lineup has been welcomed as a reflection of the diverse unity government that the Rulers had suggested. — AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

ment, it has become a no-holds-barred onslaught.

The Prime Minister has found himself accused of being an Israeli spy, while others have been called LGBT+ supporters and communists, thanks to one imaginative and fertile mind.

Even the Rulers have been criticised, although in a more subtle way, but the tone of discontent is palpable. They have ignored the line, for sure.

The election is over. His Majesty called for a unity government with Perikatan Nasional – comprising Bersatu, with PAS – invited to join the government, but Perikatan declined.

It was no surprise because Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin wouldn't have fancied playing obliging subordinate to Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim,

who was the choice of the Rulers for PM.

While Bersatu leaders have stated their preference to be in the Opposition, PAS president Tan Sri Abdul Hadi Awang's hysterical outbursts haven't quite tickled Malaysians' funny bones.

He may have 49 Members of Parliament but he must surely feel anguished at being out of power at the federal level, especially with such a big block of lawmakers.

But PAS needs to get a grip. The events of GE15, which led to an inconclusive result, have proven that no single political coalition can form a government without the participation of all Malaysians, including Sabahans and Sarawakians.

No doubt Perikatan has won over the Malay heartland, especially the

“fixed deposits” of Felda settlers, and even the Putrajaya constituency, the government's seat.

But Perikatan can't hope to form a government if the rest of the country doesn't subscribe to PAS' politics.

It's unfortunate that the Opposition is now nearly all-Malay, but, fortunately, the government bench is more diverse. There's obviously nothing for PAS to brag about.

The party needs modern and progressive leaders if it hopes to achieve its aim. It needs a kinder and more open narrative to win over the rest of Malaysia, and not just the East Coast of the peninsula.

PAS is arguably regarded as a party dominated by religious leaders with qualifications from West Asia, but lacking strong fundamentals in finance, economics and the sciences.

A constant barrage of statements reeking of Talibanism isn't going to help them.

Umno will now need to work on its lost Malay ground. It must cleanse itself of its tainted and corrupt image which has scarred the party.

President Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, like it or not, has plenty of work to do. He can't preach the virtues of being in a unity government and be seen as the person who almost single-handedly killed Umno and Barisan Nasional.

Perlis fell to Perikatan by default, and now the state has a PAS Menteri Besar for the first time.

The polls are over. Malaysia needs to get back to work and brace itself for a tough 2023. There's simply no time for unproductive politics.

It's better for the new Federal

Editor's pick

Time to heal and reconcile



Government to dedicate itself to making Malaysia a country we can all be proud of, with the rest of the world viewing us favourably.

Leave the dogmatic religious hardliners alone. Stop talking of banning PAS or arresting its leaders, as we will only create martyrs of them, an because, ultimately, it's more important that the unity government proves its mettle.

If needed, appoint good PAS lawmakers who can contribute to their positions. Why not? There is good talent in all parties, and on both sides of the divide, too.

Let bipartisan politics be a part of a developing, mature democracy, where substance matters more than form.

As Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu said in *The Art of War*, “Keep your friends close, but keep your enemies closer”.

If the unity government is genuine, let it be an inclusive government.

Those of us who know Anwar will concur that he doesn't give up on anyone. He will meet everyone, including those who've bad-mouthed him, to win them over.

His policy has always been that if he can't have them aligned with him, he would want them to, at least, not oppose him. It will be harder this time, though.