

# Doctor needs a reality check

Dr Mahathir has been injecting too much hate and poison into the body politic.

TUT, tut, Tun, when will you stop? How much more venom must you hurl at us before you are satisfied?

The short answer is never, unless he is somehow incapacitated. Or the media collectively black him out, which is wishful thinking because his vicious, bitter rants make such juicy news that always riles up the public.

In my July 12, 2023, column titled *Dr M doesn't love me after all* (online at [tinyurl.com/ymbdphra](https://tinyurl.com/ymbdphra)), I expressed my deep disappointment and disgust at Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's vitriolic diatribes against his fellow citizens of Chinese and Indian origin.

From a revered, respected leader, he is now possibly the most hated man in the country, at least among rational, right-thinking Malaysians.

My perceived loss of his affection, if ever there was any in the first place for the Chinese, was based on his faulting the community on a number of issues including being rich, eating with chopsticks instead of with the hand, and wanting to rename Tanah Melayu to something more multi-ethnic, which was completely unfounded.

He renewed his racial rants this month in an interview with Thanthi TV.

Even though he questioned the loyalty of Malaysians of both Indian and Chinese origin, the angry reactions have largely come from the Indian community, perhaps because the source was a Tamil news satellite television channel based in Chennai, India.

The fury against Dr Mahathir is understandable because in his mind Malaysia cannot belong to non-Malays as they have not completely assimilated into the Malay community by speaking only



JUNE HL WONG

**So aunty, so what?**

Malay at home, practising Malay customs and presumably converting to Islam, as these are the three criteria that define what a Malay is in the Federal Constitution.

How disingenuous of him. But again not surprising considering how he has glibly rejected his own Indian roots, saying he is 100% Malay, completely erasing his "spoonsful of [Indian] blood" that he acknowledged in an 2018 interview at the 24th Nikkei Conference in Tokyo.

Like many Malaysians, I was initially taken aback by his relentless attacks on the Chinese and Indians because this was not the revered leader we thought we knew.

The truth of the matter is we had collectively forgotten the real Dr M that was manifested in his 1970 book, *The Malay Dilemma*, which was his take on the root cause of the May 13, 1969, race riots and so controversial that it was initially banned.

He was seen as an "ultra", aka extremist, Malay which was why many were shocked when then prime minister Tun Hussein Onn appointed him as deputy prime minister, and therefore the heir apparent, in March 1976.

But during the course of his long premiership, Dr M knew how to allay fears and doubts by

throwing out many dissembling tactics, like the Bangsa Malaysia policy. Now we know he had never actually changed his thinking and prejudices against the so-called migrant communities in this country.

Admittedly, I have not read *The Malay Dilemma* but books bobs.com's summary of the book reflects to a T what Dr M told Thanthi TV: "This book seeks to explain the causes of the 13 May 1969 riots in Kuala Lumpur, to explain why the Malays are economically backward, to explain why the Malays feel they must insist upon immigrants becoming real Malaysians speaking, in due course, nothing but Malay, as immigrants to Australia speak English, as immigrants to America speak nothing but the language of what the author calls 'the definitive people'.

"Dr Mahathir argues that the Malays are the rightful owners of Malaya, that immigrants are guests until properly absorbed. He makes the point that immigrants are not truly absorbed until they have abandoned the language and culture of their past."

So much for diversity and inclusiveness.

But if he was so against multiracialism as a hallmark of the nation, why did his government come up with the enduring and captivating tourism slogan, "Malaysia, truly Asia", in 1999? Shouldn't it have been "Malaysia, truly Malay"?

Indeed, I marvel at his hypocrisy. For one so fixated on using Malay as one's first language as a massively important criterion to show ownership and loyalty, why then did he write *The Malay Dilemma* and his 2011 memoir, *A Doctor in the House*, in English first before they were subsequently translated to Malay?

I am also curious whether Malay is the only language used in his own home. This is because his family members seem very comfortable using English and his very nice wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ah, writes in English in her private journal.

I know this from my exclusive interview with her covering the family holiday to Antarctica and Argentina's Pampas and Andes regions in 2002 and she showed me the journal and, with permission, *The Star* printed extracts from it.

The bigger tragedy and damaging fallout I see from Dr M's unbridled hostility and suspicion towards non-Malay citizens is the negative influence it has on our national social harmony.

As the Thanthi TV host repeatedly pointed out, Malaysia's Federal Constitution guarantees all citizens the right to profess any religion and practise their customs in peace and harmony. From his reaction, one can see all this means nothing to Dr M who brushed it aside with eyes closed.

We have been wringing our hands and lamenting over the deepening fractures and polarisation in our race relations for decades now.

The biggest cause of this is the race and religion cards used by too many unscrupulous politicians to divide and rule us.

Of late, it has become even worse because of what Dr M and other ultra Malay and Islamist leaders are openly espousing and preaching, which is Malay-Muslim supremacy, disdain for the Constitution, and intolerance towards other Malaysians in matters of race and religious matters.

As we know, lies repeated often enough can create the illusion, or should I say, delusion of truth and

right. That is why polarisation on the peninsula keeps worsening as, increasingly, non-Malays are viewed as rapacious immigrants, their loyalty suspect and their culture and beliefs unwelcomed blotches on the landscape of Tanah Melayu.

Dr M's status may have once made him untouchable. But now the knives are out for him. The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has begun investigations against his eldest son Mirzan and his closest crony, former finance minister Tun Daim Zainuddin.

It may take some time before we know of the outcome of the probes and how wide the dragnet will go. As Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said, if it is not easy to investigate high-profile figures for corruption and misappropriation of government funds, including those with the title of Tun.

That may be true but surely the authorities can act faster against those with titles when they spew remarks and comments that definitely disturb public peace and harmony?

After all, if the police can arrest an individual for alleged sedition in a comment made regarding diplomatic ties with Israel, surely Dr M's latest remarks on Thanthi TV are even more seditious since they clearly promote "feelings of ill-will and hostility among different races and classes".

He has gotten away with nasty and demeaning remarks against our royalty, the government and we, the people. It's time this unity government shows him and others like him that they are not above the law.

**The views expressed here are entirely the writer's own.**