The winners and losers of GE13
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By The Malaysian Insider

KUALA LUMPUR, May 6 — Take a bow, Malaysians. You are the big winner from GE13, you have firmly entrenched the two-coalition system in the country.

The days of Barisan Nasional (BN) having unfettered power are truly over. The result of 2008 was not a flash in the pan, it merely was the start of a trend. Yesterday, that trend continued and Malaysians gave Pakatan Rakyat (PR) 89 federal and 230 state seats and 51 per cent of the popular vote.

What is crystal clear is that many Malaysians want a system of check and balance.

Now the audition for the next polls begins. It is really up to BN to accept that despite the victory, much is wrong with the BN formula and that the non-Malays, especially Chinese, sought refuge with PR simply because the excesses of BN politics and overt racism in this beloved country have become intolerable.

For PR, today will be tough but the prized jewels of Selangor and Penang still remain in your clutches and your popular vote was some 240,000 over BN, despite facing a machine with billions of ringgit at its disposal.

But the fact remains that many Malays remain unsure about your policies and direction. And without the support of Malays in Malaysia, change is impossible.

All said, Malaysians take a bow. Activism is very much alive in this country and people were willing to speak up for their convictions and political ideals, stepping out of their comfort zones for what they believed. And turning out to vote in record numbers. That is true patriotism.

The other winners from GE13:

● Najib Razak

Though the BN performed worse than five years ago, Datuk Seri Najib Razak's (picture) position as the president of Umno is secure.

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad suggested a month ago that Najib could come under threat during the Umno polls in November if he did not matchTun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's position but the simple fact is that Brand Najib carried Umno to victory this time around.

Yes, money was thrown around like confetti and populist policies were the norm in the run-up to the polls but it is arguable that without his stamina on the stump, Umno would not have won so many seats. Hard to see anyone rising to challenge him from within Umno.

● Nurul Izzah Anwar

Don't think there is a more loved politician than this woman of grace. Some tout her as a future prime minister but her rise and rise in Malaysian politics is testimony that you don't have to indulge in muck raking and negative politics to come up.

When Nurul speaks, she talks about hope, so unlike many Malaysian politicians who fear monger. She was carried across the line against the financial might and organisation of Senator Raja Datuk Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin by Malaysians who truly cherish her humility and inclusiveness.

● Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud

He thumbs his nose at the MACC and doesn't care what people think about his integrity or how well endowed all members of his family are. Why?

Because in Sarawak, he is king. Just before the Sarawak elections, Najib gave him a timetable to retire. Might as well junk that timetable.

He delivered big time for BN and sent a powerful message that he is truly formidable in Sarawak. Sad but true. No doubt helped by a fractured opposition. Any chance of the MACC visiting him soon? Don't hold your breath.

● Liew Chin Tong

This young man is the architect of the DAP's victory in Johor. He figured that PR might as well take the battle to the heart of Umno and BN rather than wait to be mauled and assaulted in their own strongholds.

He convinced a few party elders and rising stars to join him in Johor, and along the way, expanded the DAP's federal seats total to 38 with the combined multi-racial support of Johor.

If there ever was a Johor Way, Liew found it and showed the rest of Malaysia that nothing can stop an idea whose time has come.

● Khairy Jamaluddin

Five years is a long time in politics and it has been a boon for a young man who has matured into an astute politician in his quiet way.

The Umno Youth leader also tripled his majority from 5,746 votes in Election 2008 to 18,357 in the May 5 general election, showing that there are BN politicians whose popularity is real in his constituency and beyond.

He has shown his party that his appeal is beyond the core conservative right-wing elements and that he can reach out to most Malaysians his generation. Umno and BN would do well to keep rising stars like him in the front and centre of their future government and campaigns.

● Bersih

This organisation must take some credit for energising Malaysians to go out and vote. Messrs Ambiga Sreenevasan and others have done a sterling job in making Malaysians understand that voting is a civic duty of every citizen and highlighting the many weaknesses of the current electoral system.

The record voter turnout of 80 per cent and the largely peaceful elections are proof that civil society has a large role and place in Malaysia.

LOSERS

● MCA

The party is irrelevant. They might as well convene an EGM and drop the "C" from the MCA because the political party does not represent the Chinese community.

They hung their whole campaign on scaring the Chinese voters about PAS and hudud and this plan of action had little traction. More than anything else, the failure of the hudud strategy shows how out of touch the party is with the aspirations of the community.

Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek and gang should make way. And the MCA? Time has come for race-based parties to fold.

● The mainstream media

Time to punish the lies of the mainstream media. The Star, Utusan Malaysia, NST and others have dragged down the noble profession of journalism.

But their lies and scare-mongering didn't work. More than 50 per cent of the country voted for PR, which performed better than in 2008.

The message is out there: Malaysians prefer balance and the truth. Malaysians generally have a sense of justice and hate it when only one side of the story is told, even more so when the bad guys are always the opposition.

Remember this fact, mainstream media. Urban Malaysia voted for PR and that is your circulation and advertising market.

How about this, Malaysians? Put the mainstream on probation for a week and if they still don't change, start a massive boycott and hit them where it hurts.

● Datuk Zulkifli Noordin and Datuk Ibrahim Ali

And the gongs for the most popular losers go to the BN candidates for Shah Alam and Pasir Mas. May these two Perkasa chaps fade away.

They represent something which no country needs: divisiveness. How both are feted/treated will be a measure of Najib's commitment to reconciliation.

● Racism

Last night, Najib blamed opposition politics for the strong swing of Chinese voters away from BN.

We suggest that detailed analyses be kept until all the data is in but it is likely that the Indians also did not return to BN in a big way.

And before TV3 and the mainstream media start bashing the non-Malays and blaming Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Lim Kit Siang, please remember the contributions of Dr Mahathir and other Umno politicians who spooked Malays daily with their rhetoric over possible loss of Malay privileges if PR took control of Putrajaya.

The sad fact is that after 56 years, much is still seen through the race prism. First-world infrastructure but still a people defined by colour of skin?

● Election Commission

The less said about this bunch, the better. Impartial? No. Professional? No. We am not talking about the thousands of volunteers and ground level staff of the EC, we are referring to the upper echelon of the EC. The ones who ignored all the complaints and said it was business as usual.

The ones who gave excuses for the indelible ink, and the lack of preparedness in running the general election. Time for the government to put in professionals to run an election, not retired civil servants who see this as a reward for their careers.

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