

**Malaysia's future seems fraught with uncertainty**  
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**By Karamjit Gill**

**Just like the haze, there appears to be no end in sight to the uncertainties we face**

As I sit in my room and look out the window, I begin to reminisce about how wonderful a country Malaysia used to be. People were highly tolerant and lived in harmony. I remember my childhood days of going out with friends and engaging in sporting activities every evening with not a worry in the world. Snatch thefts were a rarity and kidnapping was unheard of. Cultural, English-speaking Malaysia was a favourite destination for tourists.

Soon I am jolted back to reality. I realize that due to the haze I cannot even see buildings 100 metres away. It does occur to me that the haze is not just what I see around me, it is also an almost perfect description of the state of the country today. Uncertainty is everywhere. I am starting to worry about how bleak the future looks from my vantage point.

Suddenly today authorities are dropping hints that the haze we are experiencing may not end soon and I realize that there is also no end in sight for the political, social and economic uncertainty we are facing.

The news is full of stories of kidnapping, murder, robbery and hate. Even before the dengue situation can settle, we have now been hit with typhoid. Rabies was an issue just a little while ago. In 1994, the World Health Organisation announced that leprosy had been eliminated in Malaysia. However over the past few years there have been a number of leprosy cases in Malaysia.

Economically, the situation in the country is far from satisfactory. The ringgit is at its lowest in decades. The share market is not great either. The property market is out of reach for the average Malaysian. The cost of living is on the rise. RM 100 can barely get you through an essential grocery shopping trip. And the icing on the cake – taxation is increasing as are toll rates.

In terms of education, our system is nothing less than a joke. A once English-eloquent nation, we are now finalizing terms to recruit English-trained teachers from India to help improve competency levels of English among local teachers. More than ninety per cent of paper qualifications from local varsities are not recognized internationally. Our Ministry of Education is spending more time trying to justify vernacular education than improving national school standards. It is not surprising that Members of Parliament today struggle to converse, even in our National Language.

Politically, we are messier than a cowshed.

The ruling Barisan Nasional government is under massive scrutiny. Alleged corruption involving 1MDB in such trying times when the average breadwinner is struggling to keep afloat, leaves a bad taste in the mouth. There is so much filth being thrown around. Parliamentary sessions are becoming assemblies where questioning is frowned upon. Sensitive issues can no longer be discussed. Any slight argument, any statement or question that does not favour the government and the Speaker expels the individual

from the sitting. There is no coherence in either speech or action. In one instance, the Prime Minister allows a racially extremist gathering and the next moment he is speaking against racial division.

Initially, the Opposition coalition under Pakatan Rakyat gave us reason to hope that there could be life after BN. However since the untimely demise of Karpal Singh and Tok Guru Nik Aziz that dream has also been shattered. Pakatan Rakyat appears to have died with them.

Pakatan Harapan is a forlorn hope. First, we were made to believe that PAS was the problem. Now that PAS has split, frequent disagreements between DAP and PKR do not augur well for the future of the opposition. Constructive arguments are great, but incessant arguments on minute issues don't do any good. DAP's disapproval of how Azmin and his PKR team are running Selangor produces an ugly odor. If administering a state poses so many problems, one can only imagine what chaos would result if they ran the country. A small dispute with regards to a Deepavali bazaar led to name-calling and finger pointing on social media.

If you think the BN coalition is wobbly, then the Opposition is multiple folds weaker. I once thought that if the general election was called for tomorrow the Opposition would make a clean sweep. The dysfunctional opposition may just lead to the BN winning even more seats. The Opposition is not brimming with confidence, there are doubts and dilemmas.

People acknowledge the problem with Najib but the common question being asked is "If Najib goes, who else can lead the country?" It is a worrying sign that people are simply willing to tolerate Najib as PM because they do not think the Opposition is capable enough. Better the devil you know.....?

Now that hope is dimming, certain quarters are looking to Tun Mahathir as a hero and savior when he in actuality is the sole destroyer of this wonderful country. It is shameful and nauseating that some people find an angel in the devil. Najib's alleged wrongdoings are child's play compared to Dr. M's who was easily the most selfish, egoistic and racial maniac in the history of Malaysia. Yet he is being applauded today.

I shudder when I consider what we have become and where we are headed to. Where is the hope? Is there any hope at all?

What happened to the Malaysia I knew?

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