

Umno-PAS cooperation will help BN
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LETTER | There has been much speculation that Umno and PAS could combine for GE14. Fearing the worst, these two parties could cooperate to ensure victory for both. It is possible that there could be some major give and take in the next elections for both the parliamentary and state assembly seats.

BN is desperate to win more parliamentary seats to hold on to power in the country whereas PAS has always been keen to take hold of power in the states where the real power of Islam lies, especially in the Malay heartland states of Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Kedah, Perlis and Perak.

PAS would relish being in control of more states than the present one – Kelantan. Given that the next election will be difficult and more centred on religion, governance and racial issues, there is a prospect of PAS and Umno sharing seats to ensure both hold on to power.

PAS in the states and Umno at the federal level. PAS concentrates more on religious issues in the Malay heartland states. As Islamic issues come under the purview of the states and the rulers, PAS could opt for state power and allow Umno to go for the parliamentary seats.

Three-cornered contests need to be avoided as they are risky. Umno and the BN are more keen on maintaining the present number of parliamentary seats or better still, get a two-thirds parliamentary majority.

PAS is not in a good position presently to win more parliamentary seats due to the break-up leading to the formation of Amanah and the split with Pakatan Rakyat and loss of multi-racial support.

PAS could find it difficult to counter the onslaught of Pakatan Harapan especially in the present situation and should allow Umno, which is more resourceful and combative, to take on Pakatan Harapan in straight contests.

PAS could help Umno with the parliamentary seats and Umno could help PAS in the state seats. PAS should only contest in a token number of parliamentary seats and concentrate its firepower in the states.

PAS should not worry about ministerial positions as its deserving and qualified members can be appointed as senators and subsequently as ministers given important portfolios if the BN wins.

If PAS supports Umno in the straight contests, there is every prospect that the Umno candidates can win albeit with a small majority. With the support of Umno, these states will have major development programmes in the pipeline and PAS can avoid criticism that they will become stagnant and non-progressive.

It could be a win-win situation for both parties. The non-Malay BN component parties are now on the defensive and Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak will not be in a mood to hear them talking unfavourably about an Umno-PAS partnership to win the next election which has been rightly termed as the 'mother of all electoral battles in Malaysia'.

For the prime minister, the most important aim is to win even by a simple majority. The next polls will be tough, risky and desperate for both PAS and Umno and their most important objective should be to scrape through given the serious challenge mounted by Harapan and various other issues in the country.

Although it has been said that the prime minister has given up hope on winning over the Chinese community and has possibly given up on re-taking Penang, the Indian community, however, could play a crucial role in helping BN especially in Perak, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Johor and Negri Sembilan.

It should be Najib and not the MIC and other Indian-based parties who should take the lead in winning the Indian swing votes. Najib is the only prime minister since Merdeka who has directly (not indirectly or partially) helped the Indian community and most Indian voters will look favourably at him.

Even though a lot needs to be done to uplift the community, Indians are satisfied that a good start has been made under Najib's tenure after decades of marginalisation and neglect.

The Indian B40 and the M40 will very much favour BN due to the socio-economic support schemes. The MIC should keep a low profile in the GE14 as nothing infuriates and agitates Indians more than to see the MIC self-seekers and leaders canvassing for votes for their candidates and other BN contestants.

As an Indian, I know how the majority in the community feel about the MIC. Hindraf, despite being unable to fulfil its promises, is loved more by the Indians as compared to the MIC.

In Selangor, where it is a tough proposition to win back the state, only cooperation between Umno/BN and PAS can ensure victory. PAS and Umno need to cooperate on the state/Parliament formula to win the seats in the Malay majority rural areas and as usual, allow the BN component parties to have the mixed urban areas.

Although Harapan has a better chance in the urban areas in Selangor, an Umno and PAS concentration in the rural areas could help BN tip the balance to regain power in Selangor. A PAS and Umno/ BN combination could be a formidable one in Selangor.

A more or less similar formula can be applied to the southern states of Negri Sembilan, Melaka and Johor. BN should not have any major problems in retaining Sabah and Sarawak due to its various socio-economic development plans that are helping these two states.

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