

End of the rainbow for Malaysia?

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If you say that something is at the end of the rainbow, you mean that people want it, but it is almost impossible to obtain or achieve. This is the situation we are in right now.

Malaysians aspire to live in a society characterised by peace, harmony, prosperity and progress.

However, in the wake of Umno Youth chief Dr Akmal Saleh's clash with convenience store chain KK Mart, and former prime minister Najib Razak's reduced sentence, along with distressing news of a single mother becoming the first woman to be whipped in Terengganu for khalwat, concerns about where Malaysia is heading have resurfaced.

Across the causeway, we are witnessing a remarkably smooth transition of leadership in Singapore. Guided by level-headed individuals, prioritising the nation over personal interests, the announcement that Lawrence Wong will succeed Lee Hsien Loong as prime minister on May 15 has been met with widespread approval.

The same welcoming excitement when Tharman Shanmugaratnam was elected the president of Singapore.

Heartwarming videos showcasing Wong's cultural embrace, such as playing "Selamat Hari Raya" on a gambus with fellow Malay musicians, and charming the audience by strumming the guitar while singing Eric Clapton's timeless hit "Wonderful Tonight", added a personal touch to his leadership journey.

Indonesia's recent presidential election is another good example of peaceful transition for Malaysia. Prabowo Subianto did his signature dance move as seen in a video after claiming victory. Singing, dancing and playing instruments are ways to bridge the gap between top leaders and the public.

After Dr Mahathir Mohamad stepped down as prime minister for the second time on Feb 24 2020, there was uncertainty for several days regarding his successor.

This prompted the intervention of the king, a constitutional monarch, who played a crucial role in resolving the issue.

He met with each MP to assess their preferences, and ultimately made the final decision on who would become the next prime minister. Even the appointment of Ismail Sabri Yaakob as the ninth prime minister was mired in controversy and required the king to step in.

Malaysia's prime ministerial post is filled with uncertainty, which begins with a guessing game on who has the numbers, followed by sworn statements to prove political allegiance, and the to-and-fro to the palace for special interviews – nothing heartwarming.

The rakyat will get another tonne of promises, and the country reverts to the 3Rs, of race, religion and royalty, soon after.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, when asked about Najib's bid to serve the remainder of his sentence under house arrest, responded tersely: "I prefer not to be embroiled in Najib's 'supplementary order' issue."

It is apparent that Anwar is not the type to sing.

While some say Singapore is boring and predictable, it has a well-managed economy and succession planning. The new prime minister is 51 years old, and the president, who is an economist, is 67. Malaysia has no succession planning and Anwar is 76.

Since no political party has an outright majority to form a government, it will be dependent on common sense, goodwill, loads of money, and promises of position, plus a lot of sworn statements to form a Malaysian government.

Former minister Khairy Jamaluddin, at 48, may fit the bill to compete with the incoming Wong.

Khairy, who now hosts the “Keluar Sekejap ” podcast, plays the guitar in a band, is Oxford educated, and is tall and handsome.

He can give Wong a run for the money. If Khairy becomes the prime minister, then he and Wong can form the Malaysia Singapore rock band to promote unity. After all, we had Malaysia Singapore Airlines before.

Many are concerned in Malaysia about the rule of law. There is a strong perception that while our judiciary has meted out justice according to the Constitution, there are still people who feel that laws are not applied equally across the board.

This is the case in point for Akmal, who seems to be handled with kid gloves by the authorities over statements made.

At the recent launch of a book titled “My Country and I, The Malaysia Agreement 1963”, guest speaker Prof Shad Saleem Faruqi, who gave a talk on “Sabah and Sarawak: Special position in the Malaysian Federation”, was asked by the audience about the right to secession following Singapore’s footsteps.

The question of secession or separation has cropped up more and more as Sabah and Sarawak try to shy away from the destructive politics of Peninsular Malaysia. The people of the Borneo states have disassociated themselves from the self-serving Malay politicians who will only end up destroying Malaysia.

The Rukun Negara's principles of belief in God, loyalty to the king and country, supremacy of the constitution, rule of law, and courtesy and morality as our guiding principles are being challenged openly. None is being followed by our political leaders.

If this situation continues, we will eventually see a separation of the Borneo states from Malaya. Former foreign minister and Umno member Anifah Aman has backed the call for Sabah to ban Akmal from entering the state. Umno members in Sabah should be ashamed for inviting a divisive figure to the state. The state election is around the corner and people will remember.

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