

Hail the **third** Merdeka

MY VIEW

BY DZULKIFLI ABDUL RAZAK



In a couple of days, Malaysia will celebrate her 61st Merdeka on Aug 31. This time it is not just a rerun for the 60th time so to speak. Rather it is one of a kind due to a variety of reasons.

Notable among them is the fact that the celebration will be held under the auspices of the newly minted Pakatan Harapan government. And this is a significant milestone to (re)shape the nation anew.

In view of this, the upcoming Merdeka event has been dubbed as the third in the series of Merdeka as it too "liberates" the country from an "incompetent" regime.

If the first (1957) Merdeka unshackled the country from the elitist clutch of colonial power, the third version did so from a ruling coalition of local elites who are out-of-touch with the rakyat.

Fortunately, both saw a "bloodless" (albeit reluctant) transition of power, but they were equally painful nevertheless.

These are vital reminders that must not be forgotten. In fact, the world over was amazed how Malaysians were able to conduct themselves very maturely in a democratic way.

More so because the 14th general election (GE14) was slotted much too close to May 13 - intentionally or otherwise.

The date in 1969 is by all counts a "dark spot" in the country's history, which otherwise remained remarkably peaceful within the civil sphere. Still, the general election reaffirmed that Malaysians are generally peace-loving and resilient people. Among them this time are a relatively large group of young voters born after 1969.

Be that as it may, the 1969 tragedy cannot be dismissed outright as it has a close link to the emergence of the second Merdeka.

Particularly beginning May 16 when the then democratically elected government was forced to give way in a favour of a National Operation Council (Mageran) that lasted until Feb 23, 1971.

Henceforth, the "return" to a democratic rule arguably is another form of Merdeka for the second time. After all, it led to the disbanding - quite willingly - of a "non-civilian, non-democratic" apparatus in preference of a voluntary restoration of an elected government with an even tighter set of caveats and the rule of law. This, however, as we found out recently, is not sufficiently so.

This is evident from the aftermath of the general election, where a massive clean-up is imperative, this time caused by unprecedented corruption and alleged abuse of power never seen before nationally or internationally as claimed by some.

It therefore marked another milestone in the country's struggle to steadfastly save the country from failing.

Indeed, prior to the general election, Malaysia's sovereignty was allegedly being

threatened under the cloak of corruption and rampant abuse of power.

This is substantiated, of late, by several charges laid on the ruling elites working hand in glove with some unscrupulous power brokers, locally and abroad.

The alleged collusions were conducted away from public scrutiny, distracted by secessions of lop-sided mega-projects in the name of foreign direct investment - illogically practised and defined.

It is so lop-sided that the prime minister used the word "stupidity" to rubbish them.

One would expect, as we move closer to a developed nation status in 2020, words like "equanimity" becomes the key in describing the situation.

On the contrary, "equanimity" instead is scandalised, applied to a super luxury piece of property that is allegedly appropriated through the country's coffers.

The prime minister upped the ante when he made mention of a new type of colonialism that comes easy as soon as "stupidity" makes its mark.

In other words, Malaysia is a probable candidate to be (re)colonised, no matter how hard those implicated choose to deny it.

Especially when the other parties and power brokers involved are equally gullible, if not downright unethical.

That the prime minister courageously made such an observation during his latest official visit abroad speaks volumes of how vulnerable the situation is nationally.

Yet these are mere tips of the iceberg as even more cans of worms were uncovered within the 100-day period after the last election.

Just from this brief run down of events, one can already pick up ample reasons why the 61st Merdeka celebration is "special".

It is no less another wave of Merdeka that Malaysia (not just Malaya) gallantly "fought" to save the country from being subtly subverted, and its wealth and dignity squandered again.

Lest we forget many countries in the African continent are lamenting on such a fate as the rugs are being pulled right under



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad waving the Jalur Gemilang after launching the 'Merdeka Month' and 'Fly the Jalur Gemilang 2018' events on Aug 4.

them through the infamous tactics of "the debt diplomacy".

Malaysia therefore must keep the highest level of equanimity so as not to be manipulated into such unsuspecting diplomatic schemes aimed at undermining our sacred Merdeka.

Thus, come Aug 31 let us then stand shoulder to shoulder to forge a smarter and brave new Malaysia, riding on the third wave that we collectively created to fend all forms of conspiracies by (re)asserting #kitapunyaMalaysia in the spirit of Sayangi Malaysiaku.

With some four decades of experience in education, the writer believes that "another world is possible". Comments: letters@thesundaily.com



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LETTERS

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Make the CEP report public

THE announcement made by Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the Council of Eminent Persons' (CEP) report may not be made public is most surprising, unexpected and even disturbing.

He made the statement at the Cities 4.0 and Business 4.0 International Conference and Exhibition in Kuala Lumpur on Monday.

We had all been waiting with bated breath for the revelations of this CEP Report, for over 100 days now - but most of us will now be badly disappointed by possibly being denied the sight of this important report.

Most Malaysians will be upset that the new Pakatan Harapan (PH) government, which promised this CEP Report, now may not want to make it open for the public appreciation and public interests.

We would ask why should the CEP report be even considered so secret that the CEP Reports Recommendations may not be revealed? What is the basis and rationale for this unusual secrecy?

Why has the report been deemed to be so secret, when it was prepared by very learned,

trusted, expert and eminent Malaysians?

The rakyat have the natural right to be fully informed of the thoughts, ideas and issues raised, and presented to our own government.

After all the PH Government was voted inter alia, on the promises of more transparency, better consultation and higher integrity, so, please, why the change of heart and mind on the part of the newly elected government?

Have we waited 61 years for genuine change and only to now get frustrated and even disillusioned?

On behalf of the majority of Malaysians, I would therefore appeal to the wise, very experienced and inspiring Mahathir, to please make the CEP Report public.

Please have faith to leave it to the people and the voters to judge the report's merits, feasibility and acceptability, in our best long term, national interests.

Tan Sri Ramon Navaratanam
Chairman
Asli Centre for Public Policy Studies

Insurance scheme won't work

I refer to the article which appeared in *theSun* on Aug 27 titled "Poor Insurance? Tell me why".

I think that an insurance scheme will not work to provide better healthcare for the poor. Why?

Because our insurance companies will not accept anyone who already has an existing illness.

And the norm is for them to increase the premium every time a claim has been made. In fact, our insurance companies are very

poor risk takers and shouldn't be in this line of business in the first place!

I think that retaining our existing system is far better!

The government can raise the minimum charges for consulting a doctor at government health facilities to RM5 or higher although these charges can be flexible or even be exempted for those who cannot to pay.

Winston Yap
Kuala Lumpur