

Cooperation and competition

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The Federal Court has deferred judgement on Perak crisis but regardless who is the winner, it is not going to end the Perak political turmoil. Political issues still need to be resolved through political means.

BN and Pakatan Rakyat started their confrontation since the 8 March general elections. They wish not to see the other side doing better than themselves. However, along the mutually "suppressing" process, they do not prioritise the people's interests. Political instability has reduced the credibility of the two parties and the people as well suffer from the fight. Other than vicious competition, is it true that there is no room at all for cooperation while they are competing with each other? The state legislative assembly sitting can be held successfully if both the parties are able to cast aside the question of who is the lawful state government. State assemblypersons from both the parties can then discuss and debate on the state budget to avoid a waste of budget and implementation deviation. It is how they can defend the Perak people's interests. Endless disputes will only cause the state government unable to govern the state well while Pakatan Rakyat, too, unable to play well its role of overseeing the state government. Ultimately, the state's development will be arrested. "It sounds like a fantasy asking BN to work together with Pakatan Rakyat."

Of course, they must first show their good intentions in order to cooperate. They must as well have a basis and conditions for cooperation. First of all, they must stop persuading assemblymen from the other party to withdraw and become independent representatives. For example, Pakatan Rakyat was uneasy about the withdrawal of Port Klang State Assemblyman Badrul Hisham Abdullah. Secondly, they must fairly and reasonably enforce the law without political oppression and double standards. Thirdly, they must fairly treat Pakatan Rakyat-ruled states, including issuing impartial oil royalties.

Meanwhile, Pakatan Rakyat should as well demonstrate a willingness to cooperate, including not using too strong words to criticise the federal government and enhance communication through Parliament sittings and other meetings.

Under the circumstances of reduced hostility and confrontation, together with enhanced communication, leaders of the both parties will be able to have contacts and meetings without rebound and rejection from the grassroots. They can then combine their resources and find a way out for the country's political and economic hardship.

Pakatan Rakyat-ruled Selangor and Penang are manufacturing states and they need assistance from the federal government to attract foreign investment. Meanwhile, the federal government should not deny investment applications just because the states are under the control of Pakatan Rakyat. The introduction of foreign investment can only be speeded up with the cooperation from the two parties.

Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng recently revealed that he was forced to reject a RM30 billion worth of foreign investment because he could not guarantee 1,000 electrical and electronic engineers. The investment might be a success and a huge number of job opportunities might be created if they had the assistance from the federal government.

It sounds like a fantasy asking BN to work together with Pakatan Rakyat. But in a developed democracy country, two confronting parties would be able to cooperate for the country's interests. The key lies in the maturity of democracy. Pakatan Rakyat has decided to seek registration as a coalition. BN should give its blessing. Let's allow the two coalitions to have a healthy competition and the people will decide the fate of them in the next general elections.