

COMMENT | How to win over Malays: build bridges instead of appeasement

In a previous comment piece, I argued that DAP's old guard should step aside and make way for new leaders who could make inroads among the Malay community and balance the party's "liberal" ideals with Malaysia's conservative realities.

This appeared to ruffle some feathers as some felt this was Malay appeasement.

Perhaps, I was indeed naive as some have claimed, but I believe my naivete was in assuming that it was obvious that winning over Malays does not mean veering to the right.

Let us first examine a few realities about Malaysia that any political party that wants to realistically win an election must take into account:

According to the **Statistics Department**, 69.8 percent of the Malaysian population as of 2021 is estimated to be bumiputera. Of this number, a majority are quite likely Malays.

In order to win an election - at least under the current very flawed electoral system - you need to win at least a portion of the Malay "heartland" seats. A party or coalition can win 100 percent of votes in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Penang but that will not give them enough seats to form a federal government.

A sizeable number of voters - if not the majority - in the Malay heartlands are likely to have value systems that can best be defined as conservative.

From the Malacca election, we can deduce...

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