

## You don't need a lottery to do your duty

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Article

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IT had all the ingredients of a colourful fireworks display that could have kept the nation entertained for a long time.

But this was not the case, when the "MyKad lucky draw" — *Jom Tukar dan Menang* — became a non-event.

To some it was an anti-climax, given how the report was initially framed.

Although the issue was played up when one menteri besar joined in the fray and chose to rap the Home Affairs Minister for making the allegedly "silly and rubbish" remark, fortunately it fizzled off quickly.

The person directly implicated, the former Home Affairs Minister, was bold enough to come forward to clear the air and took a sharply different stance.

This is not about the merit or otherwise of the lucky draw, rather it is about how a potentially explosive issue can be defused with humility and moral courage.

It is about prioritising what issues need more urgent attention. For too long, the "who's dun it" plot has been given prominence, with finger-pointing and blame-assigning becoming a knee-jerk response.

More so when they are controversial issues involving various parties or personalities.

So when the current Natural Resources and Environment Minister categorically refused to be dragged into the battle of wits surrounding the contest, it was a breath of fresh air.

As it happened, he gracefully accepted the cancellation and admitted that it was the prerogative of the current minister to make such a decision.

He was quoted as saying, "If that is his decision, I have no objection", without the use of any provocative superlatives.

Perhaps, after taking on the new portfolio, the former Home Affairs Minister is by now "wiser" that the turbulence over the lucky draw issue is no more than one in a teacup. And like all natural turbulence, the sooner one puts it to rest the better.

It saves a lot of time, cost and an unnecessary emotionally-charged situation, which is by and large unproductive.

Moreover, it has been remarked that ministers have many other important things to do.

One of those important things that all ministers must take heed is the recent alarming studies showing that global warming is in fact "real"; and that in the near future, Malaysians may experience a temperature rise between 0.5° Celsius and 4.5° Celsius.

With such a real possibility, we do not need more hot air, practically and figuratively speaking!

While this could be a new learning experience for those faced with unwarranted controversies, for the rest of us the lesson to take home is that we need to be more responsible in carrying out our duties as citizens.

Should each and every one of us discharge our rightful roles as good citizens, there is no reason why any similar controversy would surface at all.

Unfortunately, there is ample evidence to the contrary.

Like the Pavlov experiment, we seem to have been conditioned to "salivate" at everything when a carrot (in this case, a MyVi) is dangled in front of us.

The over-exploitation of this technique has given rise to a number of illegal scams involving victims, ranging from ordinary people on the streets, to executives and professionals.

All are lured by the promise of "fabulous" prizes that are promised by the unscrupulous organisers and agents.

All it takes is to scratch a card, pick a concealed envelope or merely respond to an SMS or an unsolicited "letter of offer".

So it is not surprising when we hear from the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry's Consumer Claims Tribunal that thousands have been duped.

The tribunal is an independent body established under the Consumer Protection Act 1999 with the primary function of hearing and determining claims lodged by consumers.

It is meant as an alternative channel for consumers to seek redress in a faster and cheaper way.

Such crimes resulted in huge losses amounting to tens of millions of ringgit last year, despite the widespread publicity about how these scams are run.

If only we can be more cautious and less gullible, we can avoid many controversies and prevent being victims of scams.

But as for now, this is not to be. Indeed, now there is yet another controversy.

This time, it was triggered by a sexist comment which was later claimed to be "*joke aje!*" But like always, it was a little too late.

Looking ahead, to prevent future similar occurrences, it may be worth considering a "chastity belt-like gadget" to be fitted on such potential loose cannons! Oops! *Joke aje!*

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