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Malaysians can not only look back on their history with pride, but can also look ahead to a future filled with hope and progress.

Malaysia's struggle for freedom from corruption, its rejection of terrorism and extremism, and its belief in integrity, transparency, democracy, tolerance, and the rule of law had been an inspiration and beacon of hope for people around the world.

On May 9, Malaysia shocked the world through a stunning electoral outcome that saw a nonagenarian return to power.

Yet only hours after election booths closed, it became clear to everyone that the impossible had happened. At the age of 92, a remarkably robust and fiery Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the former strongman of Malaysia, led an energised opposition against the formidable machinery of the previous administration.

With legendary conviction, Dr Mahathir braved the sweltering heat, a hectic campaign schedule, and endless mudslinging by his critics, who mockingly claimed he was just "too old" to run for office.

Last century saw Dr Mahathir build the foundations of an economically dynamic Malaysia. This century may see him paving the way for the creation of a robust democracy in Asia.

Malaysia has become, almost over-

night, a beacon of democratic hope. At its very heart, the latest Malaysian elections reflected a nationwide rejection of corruption and impunity among the entrenched elite.

Dr Mahathir sworn in, becomes oldest elected leader in the world

Dr Mahathir is also credited for turning Malaysia into a manufacturing hub, with a world-class infrastructure and a booming middle class. It's precisely this commendable legacy that has won him supporters across generations.

Moving forward, he will have to reform state agencies, including the judiciary and internal security services, which are still populated by holdovers from the previous government.

For now, boundless hope is in the air. Democratic change has finally come to the Southeast Asian country, though, quite paradoxically, through the intervention of a former strongman.

Decades from now, Malaysia's 14th General Election will likely be remembered as a peaceful revolution, which altered the Southeast Asian nation's history.

His greatest gift to Malaysians is HOPE. This is one of the most important moments in the life of our country. We are filled with deep pride and joy. Pride in the ordinary, humble people of this country.

Let's get Malaysia working. For we must, together and without delay, begin to build a better life for all Malaysians. This means creating jobs, building houses, providing the right education and bringing peace and security to all.

The calm and tolerant atmosphere that prevailed during the elections depicts the type of Malaysia we can build. It set the tone for the future. We might have differences, but we are one people with a common destiny in our rich variety of culture, race, religion and tradition.

The government has its own priorities and it is difficult to see the government's total commitment to resolving the socio-economic problems of the Indian community. That leaves only the community to help itself. Unfortunately, those who need help lack the resources, education, and social skills or training to help themselves. The people who have the resources are convinced that they must conserve all their savings for their families' needs as they cannot depend on government for handouts.

The Indian community has very few choices for its way forward. It has to take the matters into its own hands. We can appeal to the government for help. We have to use our ingenuity and find innovative approaches to forge our way forward.

The Indian community lacks the

resources to be self-reliant. Its lack self-respect and self-confidence and its limited resources has made it to depend on the government. However, it is time the community discarded its 'dependency syndrome'. It should shed its conformist role for that of a creative non-conformist one and be prepared to work outside the government but in partnership and with the support of the government. This should be the community's new strategy.

Development programmes must be outlined to address critical issues which have been plaguing the Indian community so that Indians are not left out of mainstream development.

The plans must be implemented systematically. Through such plans, a long-term solution to all matters involving Indians can be achieved and the plan will succeed, especially Indians facing socio-economic problems.

The government must create various opportunities through employment, entrepreneurship and education to give bright future for the younger generation.

We must keep the beacon of hope burning and pass the sacred torch to our future generations.

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