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Brendan Pereira on Monday: How dearly we miss June 6

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WE never saw June 7 coming. Sure, there were whispers that he was not happy with the way his successor was running the country; with the way ministers and business friends were not returning calls.

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But no one saw June 7 coming. That was the day Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad accused the PM of stabbing him in the back; of reversing his policies; of cancelling projects, including the half-bridge to Singapore. He attacked with the ferocity of a street fighter and suggested that Abdullah was the second choice for the top job in the country.

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He wanted to know why Tengku Mahaleel Tengku Ariff was no longer running Proton, why development in Putrajaya had slowed down. He wanted to know why the person he left in charge of the country was no longer dancing to his tune.

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Looking back, that was the day when he crossed the line. History records these watershed events because they change the mood of the country, pit kin against kin and dominate the landscape.

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If June 7 is the day we never saw coming, June 6 is the day we will not see again for a while. And how we miss it.

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We miss going to lunches or dinners and just shooting the breeze, instead of spending hours dissecting the latest tirade and figuring out why power is so hard to let go.

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We miss those days when people didn't make you feel that you're one of us or you're one of them.

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We miss the time when "half-past six" was used in a moment of levity between childhood friends.

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We miss the time when exclusive interviews about Malaysia on CNN, BBC, CNBC or Bloomberg were about the country and its prospects, not about a political sideshow.

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We miss when a can of aerosol can was not considered a weapon.

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We miss the days we watched leaders in other countries slug it out in public and said: "At least our leaders don't do that."

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We miss when we didn't war among ourselves over a war being waged by an individual.

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We miss when we spoke to a friend and didn't hear a voice in our heads whispering: "I wonder whose side he is on?"

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We miss when peace talks referred to discussions between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lanka government or between the warring factions in Palestine.

We miss the feeling when there wasn't a cloud hanging over the political landscape, and a feeling that no words or explanations can be a balm to this festering sore.

We miss the days when the mention of Dr Mahathir's name unleashed a vision of a leader handing over power at the peak of his powers, not a mental picture of someone seeking to bring down someone in power.

We miss the days when the prime minister had to defend his policies, not parry personal attacks.

We miss when a volley referred to a sweet left foot strike by Wayne Rooney, not a barb fired across the bow by the former PM against his perceived enemies.

We miss when we spoke of a legacy in glowing terms not with a sense of doom.

We miss when the world looked at us with pride and wondered why other young countries could not have a smooth change of guard.

We miss when Dr Mahathir spoke like a statesman.

We miss the time when we did not have to rake up our dark past and remember stories of former prime ministers taking on incumbents. Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Hussein Onn deserve their rest and place in history.

We miss the days when the battle lines were clear — government versus opposition.

Yes, we miss June 6.

Current Rank: **4.3** (5-High 1-Low)

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