

We need more politicians like Karpal Singh

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Quality politicians are rare. Often, political parties have no choice but to compromise on the quality of candidates for elected office.

Deciding which candidate to vote into public office is a matter of party affiliation for many Malaysian voters. However, looking at the quality of politicians that we have now, it is time Malaysians cast their votes based on specific characteristics.

The qualities of a politician are mainly natural, while some are the result of external influences.

In facing a major crisis, for example, a politician's personal conduct is crucial.

As the country mourns the passing of Karpal Singh, who was "a rarity in the venomous world of Malaysian politics", as described by the *The Economist* in its obituary, our own politicians insulted the Bukit Gelugor MP in social media.

I feel sad when I came across disrespectful and insensitive remarks from Langkawi MP Datuk Nawawi Ahmad – which he then apologised – and from former Kulim-Bandar Baru MP Datuk Zulkifli Noordin, on the death of Karpal.

As public figures, politicians should set examples and shape the quality of political life.

The favourable qualities are very often supported by skills, wits, integrity and common sense.

But Nawawi and Zulkifli apparently do not know the science and art of being politicians.

To be a respectable politician, it is crucial to exhibit good personality.

It is sad that every single issue in Malaysia is turned into a religious or a racial issue by the politicians.

Many a time I have been annoyed by politicians in the country with their lack of vision, and I know that many Malaysians have good reasons to feel the same.

We need not only institutional reforms, but also people of calibre to engage in politics and as candidates for elected office.

With his tragic passing, Karpal will be sorely missed as a true politician. Politicians from both Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat have much to learn from him.

Politics is not about personal gains. Karpal devoted his life for freedom and justice. How many Malaysian politicians possess such a quality?

The value of a politician is unwritten, but the struggle he fights and the sacrifices he makes for the country will be remembered.

Thank you, Karpal, for setting an exemplary model to politicians. My heartfelt condolences to the families of Karpal and his loyal aide, Michael Cornelius. – April 21, 2014.

** This is the personal opinion of the writer or publication and does not necessarily represent the views of The Malaysian Insider.*
