

PM: Bersih rejected stadium to foment media circus

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By Hazlan Zakaria

While he did not name names, Umno president Najib Abdul Razak today hit out at pro-electoral reform rally Bersih 3.0, alluding that organisers refused alternative venues so that participants could storm the barricades at Dataran Merdeka and gain mileage from the resulting international media circus.

“I was told that they rejected the offer of Stadium Merdeka because they want to plough (into the barricades), they want to fight, they want to kick at the cops.

“If there was no altercation, their story won’t come out in CNN, Al-Jazeera, BBC.

“That is their real purpose. They want to show that we as a government and the authorities are purportedly cruel,” Najib told the nearly 100,000-strong crowd of Umno supporters celebrating the party’s 66th anniversary at Bukit Jalil National Stadium.

“Are these the actions of civilised persons, are these the actions of those who protects the image of the nation?” he asked rhetorically, condemning Bersih organisers and supporters as those who gave no regard for neither law and order, nor the good image of Malaysia.

Najib said that if those gathered at the Putra Stadium in Bukit Jalil wanted to, they too could have captured Dataran Merdeka, but as law-abiding citizens, they do not take such base measures.

“This is because this country was liberated by Umno, developed by Umno and because of Umno, the country will become a developed and successful country.

“That’s why it will break our heart to see anything happen to our country. Whatever they want to do, Umno will uphold the dignity and image of our country,” he said.

Najib’s oratory was greeted by the cheers and jeers of the red-shirted Umno supporters from all over Malaysia, many blowing ‘vuvuzela’ trumpets made famous during the last World Cup in South Africa.

Red symbolises Umno's 'fighting spirit'

As he puts it, the seas of red that flooded the National Stadium tonight, wore the hallowed colour, which he said symbolises the blood and flesh of Umno’s “fighting spirit” and “earnest struggle”.

The PM also took a dig at the Pakatan Rakyat, hitting out at recent developments and scandals surrounding certain opposition figures.

While again not naming names, Najib hinted at the discontinuation of DAP vice-chairperson Tunku Abdul Aziz Tunku Ibrahim's senatorship, which he claimed was punishment for the latter for speaking out against Bersih.

“When a leader said: 'Eh, a street demonstration is not good for the country', and his senatorship was not renewed in a party whose name is democratic, where is the democracy? They are a party named democratic but without democracy,” he sniped.

Najib also took the opportunity to hit out at PKR *de facto* leader Anwar Ibrahim and deputy president Azmin Ali.

“One of their leaders, disdained his own mother, Umno was blamed!

“Umno was blamed for things that happen in the bedroom and inside the *kelambu* (mosquito netting)... whilst he himself dares not to swear an oath to defend himself. Where is his credibility as a leader?”

Azmin had recently decried what he described as Umno's propaganda war by using footage of his mother shedding tears purportedly over his prodigal ways on a local television station.

Anwar's refusal to swear a religious oath to clear his name from sodomy allegations and purported presence in a sex video has been a main fixture in BN's propaganda fodder. Anwar had alleged that the sodomy allegations and the video were fabrications by the BN to tarnish his good name and image.

Najib argued that Umno is more democratic than any of their opposition contenders, adding that despite allegations to the contrary, Umno's support base amongst the Malays has steadily increased.

Drawing on the jubilant mood of those gathered there, he playfully joked that he felt as if he wanted to meet the Agong today and dissolve Parliament, as it seemed to him from the support he saw today, that Umno is ready along with its BN allies to win in the next election.