

'Najib, stop playing Santa or risk being axed'

MalaysiaKini.com

Feb 17, 2014

A former top newspaper editor and a close associate of Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to "stop playing Santa Claus".

In his latest blog posting, A Kadir Jasin said participants of what he terms as the "Kedai Kopi Assembly (KKA)" felt that Najib must change the way he manages the nation and the economy.

Failing which, he warned, Najib risked "facing the possibility of being hounded out of office."

"He has to acknowledge that things are not as rosy as being portrayed by the mainstream media. He has to stop lavishing scarce public funds on cash handouts and salary increases that do not contribute to productivity and sustainability.

"He must acknowledge that his 'cash is king' stance does not work. It did not even buy him votes. He must find a more productive and sustainable method of helping the poor. He must have the gut to fire his failed, pseudo advisers and go back to relying on government machinery and civil servants," said the former New Straits Times boss.

Shout to be heard, says Dr M

Over the past months, Kadir's (left) postings have been highly critical of Najib and this led to speculation that he is part of a movement headed by former premier Mahathir and former finance minister Daim Zainuddin to oust Najib. The veteran newsman denied this.

However, in his latest posting, Kadir revealed that the KKA also had a session with Mahathir, and among those present, were two Malay economists "desperate to be heard".

"We talked about the economy, in particular the declining position of the bumiputera in recent years. Mahathir's advice to them is 'shout' about issues and problems they think the PM and the government should know and pay attention to.

"This is vintage Mahathir. The 'shout' message is 'typically Mahathir'. When you don't have the power to act, you shout," he added.

From the queue at his offices at the Perdana Leadership Foundation, Proton and Yayasan Albukhary, Kadir noted that while Mahathir (below) might be out of the loop, he was certainly not out of circulation.

"... Holding his 'Kabinet Rakyat' sessions with people of all walks of life who have stories to tell, advice to seek and spirit to strengthen – like the veteran Wanita Umno leaders who were allegedly shown the door at the PMO (Prime Minister's Office) because they came without appointment," he added.

Who will replace Najib?

Kadir also revealed that another KKA session held at a Yemeni restaurant in Mont Kiara, also saw the attendance of a prince from the Selangor royal household.

"At the princely Yemeni dinner, a question was posed: If Najib has to go (or he throws in the towel), who could or would take over?

"The response wasn't spontaneous. It took a bit of head scratching among the balding participants before Muhyiddin Yassin's name was mentioned. That was partly because Muhyiddin had purportedly said he was not interested in the job and that he was tired.

"Going by hierarchy, Muhyiddin (left) is the successor. He is deputy prime minister and Umno deputy president. But like Najib, he was not elected by members. He was merely endorsed by the Umno Supreme Council," he said.

"The most senior democratically-elected Umno leader is Ahmad Zahid Hamidi who won most votes as vice-president in last year's party election. But most KKA delegates think he is not the favoured successor. That honour

belongs to Hishammuddin Hussein, the third-ranking vice-president, and Najib's cousin," he added.

After penning a list of things which required "shouting" - including the call on Najib to stop playing Santa Clause and not bankrupt the nation - Kadir also mentioned the KKA's take on the opposition.

"Finally, on the claim by the Pakatan Rakyat that because of its expose and criticisms that the BN government 'has improved'.

"Some participants said since Pakatan is doing a superb job as opposition, the people may want them remain in that role rather than electing them as BN's replacement," he added.

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