

Expect Dr M to launch phase two of 'Get Najib'

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COMMENT It commenced with a blistering burst on April 2, where the harbinger of doom foretold that the offspring of the second prime minister would put Umno in a political casket.

Since then, he has unleashed a torrent of unflattering words against Najib Abdul Razak, which included the latter being diagnosed with a virus far more debilitating and lethal than the one his somnambulant predecessor infected Umno with.

Clearly there is no greater insult to a leader than this.

Najib has been tap dancing around the litany of criticisms and accusations, appearing on television to plead his case to the people but pointedly avoiding addressing certain pertinent questions raised by his mentor-turned-nemesis.

Despite putting on a brave front, it cannot be denied that Dr Mahathir Mohamad has rattled his bones.

Though pushing 90, it seems that the former premier has neither lost his sting nor his surgical precision in severing the umbilical cord that attaches politicians to their positions.

Mahathir would not stop clawing until what he desires is done.

When he had held the scalpel to Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's jugular, the doctor embarked on a roadshow to tell Malaysians how his handpicked successor was a walking (or rather slumbering) disaster.

This was after the mainstream media blacked out his views.

Back then, the meet-the-people sessions were organised by a number of non-governmental organisations, one of which was linked to Ibrahim Ali, who is now the president of Perkasa.

In this feud, Perkasa has again pledged undivided allegiance to Mahathir, whom the Malay rights group believes has descended from the heavens to liberate this nation.

So will Mahathir activate phase two of his operation and venture on another tour-de-lambast should Najib refuse to quit?

While some may argue that such a move is unnecessary as Mahathir's criticisms have already gone viral in the social media, there are those who feel that he must take his message to the rural areas to address the older generation of Umno supporters.

As for the denizens in the virtual world, the former premier has succeeded in bruising Najib's reputation to the point of prompting the latter to appeal to Malaysians not to believe all that appear online.

Roles switched

Mahathir and Najib have apparently switched roles with the former opportunistically moving to the middle and the latter swerving to the right.

In recent past, Mahathir condemned Najib for being too liberal and abolishing the Internal Security Act, which was an indispensable tool to safeguard national interests as well as to muzzle pesky dissidents.

He also defended the emergence of right-wing movements such as Perkasa on the grounds that Umno under the stewardship of Najib no longer hold the interests of the Malay community dear to its heart.

Under siege, Najib abandoned his transformation agenda and instead transformed himself to accommodate the demands of the party's hawks.

He had reneged on his promise to abolish the Sedition Act, which has since been fortified and a slew of arrests were made under this legislation.

On the other hand, Mahathir who was once referred to as a despot and countless of other things, has ironically shaped himself as the voice of moderation and good governance.

He expressed concern that Malaysia was turning into a police state and drowning in corruption. He also rejected the move to implement hudud while Najib has kept a stoic silence on the matter.

However, compared to the ouster of Abdullah following the 2008 general election, Mahathir faces a big problem in his 'Get Najib' operation - there is no obvious candidate to take over the helm.

Current number two, Muhyiddin Yassin, has often come across as being reluctant to sit in the hot seat, and he cannot be faulted for this after having witnessed what had happened to those who took the post after Mahathir.

Moreover, whoever is to succeed Najib should he be forced to throw in the towel must immediately start work on the 'crooked bridge' upon taking office.