

I should have stayed on as PM, Mahathir quips

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By Zikri Kamarulzaman

Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he sometimes feels that he should have stayed on as prime minister.

This, he said, will allow him to fix things that are wrong.

"Sometimes I feel sad [...] the wrong things are done and I can't fix it.

"That is why I feel I should have stayed as prime minister," he said at the 'Bicara Negarawan: You Are Not Alone' talk in Kuala Lumpur.

However, Mahathir said his time to lead the country has come and gone, but he can give his opinion about how the country is run.

"To become the prime minister, that would be difficult. It is not my time, my time has passed.

"But if you want my opinion, that can be done," he said.

Among the things he wants to do is save Umno and Barisan Nasional from Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Mahathir believes the controversies surrounding Najib, including 1MDB's debts, will destroy the ruling coalition at the next national polls.

"Come the next general elections, this will be the end for BN and Umno.

"The Umno which we (have) stood with, suddenly this person (Najib) destroys Umno.

"I cannot forgive the person who does this to Umno," Mahathir said.

As such, he urged Najib to quit for his own sake, and for the people.

No need to spend salary while in office

Meanwhile, earlier in his speech, Mahathir reminisced that occupying the prime minister's office comes with privileges.

"I can just say that I want a new airport, and it will be 'kun fayakun' (done)," he said.

He also said he could enjoy things he could not as a child.

"One day (when I was young), I wanted to eat mee. But i only had 20 sen, so the mamak wouldn't sell to me.

"But when I became prime minister, I can even have 1,000 plates of mee," he said.

Not only that, he said the government provided everything for him, from housing to transport, so he did not need to spend his salary.

"When I retired, my salary was RM20,000. Look at how many plates of mee I can buy.

"(But) I did not use my salary; the government provided me with everything," he said, adding that the government still provides for him today.

He then took a veiled jab at Najib and Rosmah Mansor's purportedly lavish lifestyle.

"I do not think anyone could spend more than (what the government provides); I couldn't even spend my money," Mahathir quipped.

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