

Dr M roadshow vs Najib TV show
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COMMENT As predicted, Dr Mahathir Mohamad has embarked on Phase II of his campaign against Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak - the roadshow.

The first of which was held in a small hall in Hulu Kelang on Saturday, where some 500 people attended, punctuated with chants "Undur Najib (Resign Najib)" on some of Mahathir's more poignant points.

At one juncture when Mahathir called on Najib to step down, a woman had the audience and the former premier in stitches when she shouted "Rosmah tak bagi (Rosmah would not allow it)", in reference to the prime minister's wife Rosmah Mansor.

Going by Mahathir's track record, the attacks on Najib would not cease until his will is done.

As for Najib, he addressed the allegations via a pre-recorded television interview on April 9, a week after Mahathir drew first blood through a vitriolic blog posting.

Since then, he has refused to launch a counter strike, choosing instead to drop subtle hints like how he was "not alone" and that the "old must allow the young to be independent".

On the other hand, he and his supporters seem to have contracted pro-Umno blogs like MYKMU.net to carry out bombing raids on Mahathir.

Tomorrow, Najib is scheduled to appear on national television again, where he would talk on the Government Transformation Programme and Economic Transformation Programme annual reports.

But pundits are wondering if this would also see Najib taking swipes at Mahathir like the last time around, when he blamed the rift on his refusal to build the crooked bridge.

It is not Najib's style to go on the offensive but he might slip in one or two potshots at the former premier to once again make it clear that unlike his predecessor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, he is no pushover.

Riding a tiger

On the other hand, Mahathir is riding a tiger in his assault against the prime minister.

During his talk on Saturday, the former premier dropped damaging innuendos about "loved ones" and "murders".

After noting how he was indebted to Najib's father, second prime minister Abdul Razak

Hussein, and that he loves Najib, Mahathir remarked: "We cannot love someone to the point that when they kill someone, we say 'ok la'."

And later, he stated: "Even if we love our wife, if our wife commits a heinous crime, we can't accept it because 'she is my wife'."

Though he denied that he was referring to Najib, speculation was rife that Mahathir was dropping hints about the Altantuya Shaariibuu murder.

Mahathir had started his move to oust Najib on the grounds that the latter's continued presence at the helm would cause Umno and BN to be defeated in the next polls.

But the more bombshells he drops, the more destruction Umno suffers with the regard to the issue of perception in the eyes of the electorate, especially the Malay electorate.

Mahathir's gamble is that Umno would realise that its president is a liability and mount the pressure on him to step down, fearing that if they do not do so, Mahathir and Najib would put all their political careers at risk.

For those in Umno, it is now a case similar to the Malay adage, "Gajah bertarung, pelanduk mati di tengah-tengah (The deer is trampled when two elephants battle)."

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