

Najib's 'bravery' lauded despite not facing Dr M

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Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Shahidan Kassim defended Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's bravery today, after the latter failed to turn up for a dialogue session on Friday, which was also attended by former premier Mahathir Mohamad.

"The prime minister did want to go that day," said Shahidan of the session, which was on IMDB and held at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur.

"I met Mahathir in Kota Kinabalu and I told him the same thing, and he responded with a smile," Shahidan told the Dewan Rakyat today.

He was responding to provocations from Mahfuz Omar (PAS-Pokok Sena) who was himself teased about his defeat in the recent PAS Muktamar.

"I heard some people (teasing me) about losing. I lost while fighting. But some people lose and call themselves Bugis warriors, but are afraid of a 90 year old man," Mahfuz said.

Mahfuz was sidetracking from the issue being debated which was about the Eastern Sabah Security Command (Esscom.)

Shahidan (photo) however blamed Inspector-General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar for Najib's absence for Friday's talk.

"What happened is not Pekan's (Najib) fault. Pekan did want to go but the IGP's orders were for him not to go," the minister said.

An hour before the event, the IGP issued an order for it to be canceled, which prompted Najib to bail from the function.

Instead it was Mahathir who spoke at the event briefly, before police took the microphone away from him.

When dared by Mahfuz to organise another talk for both Najib and Mahathir to attend, Shahidan said he would focus on defusing the tension between the two instead.

"I will do whatever I can to ensure that the differences of opinion are mitigated.

"The people should focus on efforts to develop the country, not on differing opinions, which does not benefit them," he added.

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