

Is Dr M's 'ex-friend' destroying his legacy?

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Over the last few days, murmurs about a campaign to destroy Dr Mahathir Mohamad's legacy have grown louder.

This is after government-controlled TV3 began attacking Proton, a brainchild of the former premier, who is also the national automaker's chairperson.

But the timing of the campaign only piqued curiosity as it comes less than a week after Mahathir related how a "friend" had turned up at his office pleading with him to stop attacking Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak or risk losing his legacy.

"He repeated several times that I would lose my legacy. I really appreciated his concern. He is a friend and I felt he cared for me," Mahathir had said in a blog posting last Friday.

At the end of the posting, the former premier said he finally realised this "friend", whom he later described as an "ex-friend", had given the warning because he was entrusted with the task.

"I think he and his boss believe that if I become unpopular then my condemnation of the shenanigans involving 1MDB would be ignored by the people," said Mahathir.

Mahathir did not mention names, but pointed out he had helped this person to become a successful educationist who had expanded overseas.

This was an apparent reference to public relations mogul Lim Kok Wing, who was coincidentally appointed as Najib's "special programmes coordinator".

A day after Mahathir's blog post, Lim insisted he had "absolutely the greatest respect and admiration for the former premier".

The public could only guess what was going on between the two at that time but it has now become apparent that battle lines have been drawn as Najib's team, together with its new recruit, is going on the offensive.

TV3 yesterday swiftly denied a smear campaign against Mahathir's legacy, but those aligned to the former premier have cast doubt on the denial.

Blogger: KLCC and F1 to follow

Umno blogger Shahbudin Husin said three continuous days of assault on Proton out of the blue could not be a coincidence.

"If a man visits a pretty woman's house for three times, surely it cannot be a coincidence, by accident, or that he was lost, unless the intention is to court her," he said in a blog posting today.

The psywar on TV3 appeared like a sharp plan but based on Mahathir's blog posting in advance, it seems the former premier knew of what was to come even before the campaign started.

Bloggers aligned to Mahathir immediately called out TV3 as soon as it began its assault on Proton, putting the television station on the defensive.

TV3 defended its report, stating that it was only highlighting the plight of taxi drivers about the quality of Proton, which is widely used among them.

Mahathir had yesterday sarcastically responded to the psywar by suggesting that the current government "blow up" mega projects built during his time.

While there is unlikely to be any mega explosions, Shahbudin warned that more fireworks will be in store.

"Many are confident, after Proton, one by one of Mahathir's legacy like KLCC, Perwaja, Formula 1 which is chaired by his son Mokhzani and others will become TV3's target," he said.

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