

DPM slams Umno media attacks on Dr M

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By Radzi Razak

Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin criticised attacks on former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad by the Umno media, saying such attacks would contribute to the party's downfall.

Declaring Mahathir's criticism and opinions as "okay", Muhyiddin said he had commented on the usage of an Umno-linked TV channel that lambasted the former prime minister and had announced his reservations to his boss, Najib Abdul Razak

"I agree that Tun Mahathir is like our father. The former prime minister has his own ideas. I have no problems with him. I don't know if Najib has problems with him.

"I don't support him being attacked on national TV. But the PM (Najib) said Tun (Mahathir) has been saying 'things' about the government.

"If we continue to attack him in our media, his popularity will jump to the roof and cause our downfall," Muhyiddin told the Cheras Umno division delegates conference last night.

Muhyiddin was invited there to officiate the closing of the two-day AGM by Cheras Umno chief Syed Ali Alhabshee.

Mahathir has been a subject of attack by TV3 these few months, with the opposition politicians even given air time to criticise the former prime minister.

Muhyiddin said he has spoken to Mahathir, but denied that he was in league with him to topple Najib.

"I have spoken to Tun. I took some of the conversations I had with Tun to the cabinet meeting so that people don't speculate that I am doing something for him.

'Former PM indebted to Razak Hussein'

Muhyiddin went on to deny that Mahathir has a bone to pick with Najib, saying the former prime minister was indebted to Najib's father, Abdul Razak Hussein.

"There was no talk about 'Jambatan Bengkok' (Crooked Bridge to Singapore), Mahathir said, as there was no longer the need. He was just worried about Najib because he remembered Tun Razak's kindness of taking him back into Umno.

"But then, he realised the problems faced by Najib and he then issued his opinions. I don't think he went overboard with his comments," Muhyiddin said.

Earlier, Syed Ali suggested that the Umno supreme council stops the TV3 attacks on Mahathir.

Syed Ali (photo) told the two supreme council members who attended the event - Raja Nong Chik and Johari Ghani - that more people would hate Umno if this exercise persisted.

"Why should we attack Tun? He is like our father. He has done many good deeds for the party and country.

"That is why I begged for Tan Sri (Muhyiddin) to do something. As a father, he (Mahathir) can scold us, but we can't scold him," he said.

Syed Ali also addressed criticisms against billionaire Vincent Tan for throwing a birthday party for Mahathir on Saturday.

He said Tan, a close associate of Mahathir, had been throwing birthday parties for Mahathir since 2003, after the prime minister retired, using his own money to show his gratitude.

"Don't you feel proud that a Chinese Malaysian throws such parties to show his gratitude? It is because he remembered what Tun did for him," Syed Ali said.

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