

Dr M blames Pak Lah, Najib for causing disunity among Malays

Malaysiakini

23 May 2024

Zarrah Morden

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad blamed his successors for causing division among the Malays, alleging that their incompetence caused the community to abandon Umno.

He claimed the problem began right after he resigned from his first tenure as the prime minister in 2003 and handed over the reins to Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He said during an interview that the Malays were largely behind Umno during his 22 years as the party president and Malaysia's top executive, up until Abdullah took over.

According to the Mahathir, who turns 99 next month, Umno became weak under Abdullah's rule which led to the party losing its grip on five states in the 2008 general election.

"That was the beginning of the split in Umno. Umno became very weak, and people were not supporting Umno any more," he told news portal Free Malaysia

Today in an exclusive interview.

For the record, the Umno-led BN coalition under Abdullah scored a massive victory in the 2004 general election, where it won 198 out of 219 parliamentary seats contested.

However, the coalition had a poor showing in 2008, where it lost its two-thirds majority in the Dewan Rakyat. It was also the first time BN lost in five states, namely Selangor, Kedah, Penang, Perak, and Kelantan.

“At first, people thought he was a very good leader, and they gave him full support. But between 2004 and 2008, it was shown that he was not capable,” Mahathir said.

The situation, according to him, was worsened by Abdullah’s successor Najib Abdul Razak who took over in 2009, whom he said caused a further split among the Malays.

This was due to the financial scandals during Najib’s time, he said, including the infamous 1MDB case.

Malays divided into parties

In the interview, Mahathir blamed the disunity caused by his successors for weakening the Malays' political standing which he said had rendered them unable to have majority control in the Dewan Rakyat today.

Former Umno leaders forming other political parties and causing support to be divided also contributed to this predicament, he added.

“The Malays are now split into four or five political parties.”

It should be noted that Mahathir had also quit Umno and was involved in setting up two other political parties.

In 2016, he formed Bersatu together with Muhyiddin Yassin and several other former Umno leaders.

Mahathir later formed Pejuang, another Malay-based political party, after he was given the boot from Bersatu following an internal struggle with Muhyiddin.

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