

PAS: Beware rerun of bangsawan and opera
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Mahfuz Omar says that following the May 13 incident of 1969 and Operasi Lalang of 1987, the same political sandiwara (stage show) is now being re-staged, only with different actors.

The PAS vice-president likens the recent developments in racial politics played out between Umno and MCA, in particular the fiery exchanges between Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin and MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek, to the Malay bangsawan (traditional theatre) and Chinese traditional opera.

NONE In a press statement today, Mahfuz (right) noted that since May 13, 1969, this political bangsawan and Chinese opera has been a popular attraction in the political arena.

The 1987 incident was staged due to the crisis in the multi-ethnic public's trust in the ethnic-based political parties claiming to represent their respective communities, namely Umno and MCA.

"The Chinese community lost confidence in... the leadership of MCA, who were seen to have failed to defend and protect the Chinese people," said Mahfuz, adding that the party leaders were seen to be enriching their own dynasties.

Likewise, he said, "Umno and its leaders were seen to be engaging in nepotism and cronyism to accumulate their private wealth.

"The crisis within the party leadership had obviously affected its role as the backbone of the BN coalition," he said.

'Bring your matches'

In the face of crumbling confidence in Umno and its leaders, Mahfuz said, the great bangsawan-Chinese-opera racial "sandiwara" was mounted nationwide to restore the people's "confidence".

lee kim sai "The lead actors were Najib Abdul Razak and Lee Kim Sai (left), and the crossing of their keris and sword respectively, rocked the entire nation," he said.

"While Lee loudly displayed his audacity to question Malay rights, Umno, in turn, acted like Hang Jebat defending Tuah. Umno Malays proposed to hold a rally at Stadium Jalan Raja Muda, Kuala Lumpur.

"During their nationwide tour to promote the event, they reminded the Malays not to forget to bring matches and sharp weapons to the Kuala Lumpur gathering, to burn Chinese houses down and bathe Kuala Lumpur with Chinese blood."

sibu by election 120510 najib at hoover mission house Fortunately, says Mahfuz, the police eventually shut down the planned rally, but in its wake came Operasi Lalang that rounded up various opposition and NGO leaders "as scapegoats of this tragedy".

"The two lead actors Najib (right) and Lee were given holidays in Australia, while the opposition and NGO leaders were given holidays in Kamunting detention camp," quipped Mahfuz, noting with sarcasm that both parties were hence seen as "dashing and brave"

defenders of their respective communities for their superlative performances.

Season of re-runs

Mahfuz noted that 23 years later, the same stage show is being re-run in exactly the same political scenario, only with different lead actors.

The star roles now go to Muhyiddin and Chua.

"Will there also be an Operasi Lalang 2?" he asked. "Will the opposition and NGO leaders once again be scapegoated? Then Umno and BN can continue to rule and chew up the rakyat and the nation's wealth."

The PAS vice-president warned Pakatan Rakyat leaders not to fall into the trap of Umno and BN's "cheap politics".

"Rakyat of all races, do not be Umno/BN's riding horse, to be whipped so we will run fast and win the prizes for them to enjoy. The jockey (Umno/BN) will enjoy the luxuries, while the horse remains in the stable eating nothing but hay," he quipped.

"And if the horse does not win, it will simply be shot dead."

Guan Eng: Chilling reprise

Similarly, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng urged party leaders not to "fall into BN's trap" out of the ongoing war-of-words between Umno and MCA.

NONE Also describing the latest developments as a sandiwara, Lim said it was a "chilling reprise" of the Lee-Najib public squabbles back in 1987.

"However, instead of detaining both Umno and MCA leaders involved, DAP, PAS and PSM leaders were detained. Only Lee was asked to go on holiday to Australia," said Lim in a statement today.

He said DAP leaders would again become victims should the federal government initiate another nationwide swoop to cover its shortcomings.

"As BN faced challenges of rule of law, corruption, abuse of powers and a declining economy, playing up racial sentiments is an easy way of not being accountable for their failures," said Lim.

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