

Merdeka: Dr M mourns lack of joy
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Whenever August comes around, the people's excitement and joy are showcased in various ways. The Jalur Gemilang is raised at every nook and corner, reminiscing former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

MCPX

However, he lamented that a dark cloud has now descended over the country. "Maybe I am wrong or maybe I am biased, but the people are depressed, unhappy and lack exuberance."

mahathir pc 260608 05In his latest blog posting, Mahathir argued that the gloomy feeling could be related to the hike in petrol prices and other essential items.

But, he also noted that something was not right, and this has robbed the people of the joy in celebrating the 51st anniversary of the nation's independence on Aug 31.

To illustrate his point, the former premier cited the 'fly the flag upside down' campaign initiated by blogger Sheih Kickdefella to protest the greed of political leaders from both sides of the divide.

Such a suggestion was never made during the past 50 years since the country achieved independence, he said.

Abdullah's 'predictable' response

Mahathir then turned his attention towards his successor, saying that Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's reaction to the campaign was 'predictable'.

"He interpreted the campaign as being rude and as usual there was the threat that the police would take action against the blogger. Other bloggers were also lambasted as being of no benefit (to the nation) and bring only trouble for the people.

"Did it even cross Abdullah's mind to ask why such a strange suggestion (to fly the flag upside down) was made?" he asked.

umno special briefing abdullah ahmad badawi announce resignation date 100708 05Rewinding to the crushing blow dealt to Barisan Nasional in the March 8 polls, Mahathir said Abdullah had denied there was anything wrong with the ruling coalition or the government that he leads which prompted BN supporters of all races to vote for the opposition.

"Instead, he interpreted the decline in votes as an act of sabotage and that certain quarters wanted to deny BN a two-third majority. He never questioned why they would want to do so, there was only anger and threats (made) to act against them," added the former premier.

Mahathir also lamented that numerous measures were employed to make Abdullah realise that the people were unhappy, but the latter's 'attitude of denial' led to these messages being misinterpreted and misunderstood.

In such a state of disappointment, he said, it would be hard for the people to display any joy for the coming Merdeka celebrations.

'Don't fool yourself'

Mahathir added that every race desired to be free from the shackles of colonialism and in 1957, Malaysia achieved independence and her people hoped to lead happier lives. "This is why we celebrate this auspicious day."

"I believe we still value our freedom, our independence. But something has happened to make us feel unhappy on the anniversary of our independence. We regret that we are unable to do anything to bring back the joy of an independent race.

"We should be grateful that we, be it Malays, Chinese, Indians, Iban, Kadazan and others, are not violent, dislike chaos and are not interested in rioting," he said.

malaysians 050905 "But the leaders must understand why the people feel sad this year. Don't fool yourself by saying that it is not true that the people are not happy, just look at how many people came out to watch the fireworks. Unfortunately, this (watching fireworks) is not the benchmark.

"This (watching the fireworks) is to forget the pain of being ruled by those who do not understand the feelings of the people," he added.

The 82-year-old statesman said he would celebrate Merdeka day this year but it would not be the same as how he celebrated it for the past 50 years.

"Something is lost from the meaning of independence. Mouths are shut and what is in the heart cannot be expressed. We are afraid to say anything because the police will be urged to act.

"Sometimes I feel like we are already in a police state, but maybe this is just an overreaction," he added.

Mahathir, who stepped down in 2003 after ruling the country for 22 years, ended his posting by wishing Malaysians 'Happy Merdeka'.

He however also expressed hope that "Allah would open their hearts so that they can understand the messages from the people".

Jabatan itu juga meramalkan hujan akan turun hingga ke malam.