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'It's going to be Dr M's last hurrah'

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NAJIB'S VICTORY:
Raja Petra believes PM's critics will be relegated to political oblivion at Umno's general assembly

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THE ball has never been in former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's court, contended prominent blogger Raja Petra Kamaruddin on the spat between the former prime minister and Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Raja Petra, in his blog post yesterday said, contrary to popular belief, Dr Mahathir's attendance at the Umno general assembly would not work in his favour to retaliate against Najib's position as prime minister.

Dr Mahathir's criticisms against Najib had led to speculation that the

former would not attend the assembly.

However, Deputy Prime Minister and Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said Dr Mahathir had been invited to the event.

On Friday, party secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor confirmed Dr Mahathir's attendance.

"Some see it as a great victory for Dr Mahathir and an in-your-face for Najib. But then this is how Malaysians normally think.

"They think in the box, not outside the box. They see what they want to see. They analyse things based on wishful thinking.

"Actually, it is the other way around. The victory is Najib's, not Dr Mahathir's.

"It is going to be Dr Mahathir's last hurrah.

"And the cattle being herded is Dr Mahathir, being herded straight into the slaughterhouse without being aware of it," said Raja Petra.

He said, unlike Dr Mahathir, Najib was subtle in addressing dissidents.

Raja Petra believed that Najib

would use the event to remind Dr Mahathir, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal that the party



Datuk Seri Najib Razak

president's clout had not waned even by an inch.

"Najib could have sacked Muhyiddin and Shafie. But he did not because if he had, then these two "hirelings" of Dr Mahathir would not be able to attend the assembly next week.

"Najib wants them to be there and not miss the momentous and most epic closing of the year.

"And Najib also wants Dr Mahathir to attend the assembly and witness his two underlings, Muhyiddin and Shafie, sitting on stage just like, as Muhyiddin said, two *tunggul kayu* (tree stumps).

"And these two would be forced to just sit there with their mouths closed and without being allowed to utter a squeak."

Raja Petra opined that the three would be relegated to political "oblivion" or "black hole" at the end



Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad

of the assembly, which would serve as a platform to pacify dissenters.

"So, no, next week it is not going to be Dr Mahathir's victory. It is going to be Najib's victory.

"And Najib is going to torture Dr Mahathir by making him sit through the assembly and witness his two boys muzzled and tamed with their tails between their legs.

"This is what is known as poetic justice.

"This is a masterstroke which most Malaysians do not see yet but which they will only see after the event is over."

On former deputy prime minister Tun Musa Hitam's recent statement that Najib was a "bigger dictator" than Dr Mahathir, Raja Petra said such sentiment should be viewed in a different and positive light, as it showed the Umno president's tenacity as the country's top leader.

"I see it as a compliment. Only a year ago they made fun of Najib and laughed at him and called him a coward and so on.

"They said that Najib does not have guts. And now, one year later, they are saying the opposite.

"It takes guts to be a dictator. And if Najib is a bigger dictator than Dr Mahathir, that would mean he has more guts than the old man.

"In fact, Najib has demonstrated more guts, which many, somehow, have not noticed."

The blogger said Najib was brave enough to face his critics and was not a pushover, in handling the cases of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) and the RM2.6 billion political donation.

Raja Petra also cited an example shown by Barisan Nasional Backbenchers Club chairman Tan Sri Shahrir Abdul Samad's refusal to give in to pro-opposition activist Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan's demands concerning the National Security Council bill.

"They (detractors) complain that Najib ignores their questions. They say that Najib refuses to reply in Parliament about 1MDB and the RM2.6 billion. And this takes guts.

"Weak-hearted people would not dare ignore their critics.

"They would scramble helter-skelter to pacify their critics and not be seen as shirking.

"Najib, however, gives them an in-your-face, just like what Shahrir did to Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan."