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PRIME NEWS

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad meeting with his former political rival **Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim** at the Kuala Lumpur High Court on Sept 5.

Dr M easily forgets, too

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MISTAKES? Ex-PM seems to have forgotten what he said about his political enemies



IRMOHIZAM
IBRAHIM

IN 2001, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad recited a poem titled "Malays Easily Forget" during the Umno General Assembly. At the time, Dr Mahathir was Umno president and the prime minister.

The content of the poem continues to be a subject of debate to this day. The layers behind the poem have since been peeled back. Now, nobody disputes the message.

Looking at the current political situation, the question arises: which is more important, the Malay struggle or the struggle of the reciter of the poem himself?

The last two sentences read: "Do not easily forget again. Because your struggle has not finished."

Today, while the struggle is still unfinished, Dr Mahathir has forgotten that he was delivering his message to the members of Umno and the people of Malaysia, in general.

It is no exaggeration to say that Dr Mahathir has forgotten these words in the 18 years since Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was sacked as deputy prime minister and finance minister, and the next day, was fired as deputy president of Umno.

Many people have commented on the meeting between Dr Mahathir and Anwar in court on Sept 5. Some have described the meeting as having a political motive, and indeed it might be a political ploy by Dr Mahathir to draw support for the newly registered Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia, in addition to trying to establish cooperation with other opposition parties.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi described the meeting between Dr Mahathir and Anwar as a political act without sincerity.

Zahid also sees the effort by Dr Mahathir to meet Anwar as an act of political desperation, merely to gain the support of opposition parties.

A few months after being fired, Anwar was charged with abuse of power and sodomy. Nearly two decades ago, all of the three million Umno members supported Dr Mahathir's actions against Anwar.

Most people with the same political leanings justified Dr Mahathir's actions against Anwar.

This act by Dr Mahathir to meet with his political rival of 18 years, however, is a betrayal of their trust in Dr Mahathir before this.

The former prime minister's meeting with Anwar on Sept 5 is not the first showing that he admits to making a number of mistakes during his time in charge.

Last year, Dr Mahathir took to Dataran Merdeka during the Bersih 4 rally. Recently, he apologised to the council of rulers for amending the Federal Constitution regarding the role and functions of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. Finally, he led the establishment of a new party.

In politics, leaders need to cling to the words and messages spoken before, so that there is an identity.

Any leader who does not adhere to what has been established risks being forgotten. People need a leader who believes in political reality at all times.

Dr Mahathir was once admired and respected by the people of this country, certainly by the members of Umno, but we have now come to a crossroads.

Do we forget all that he had once said about his political enemies during his 22 years of leadership? He, himself, has paved the way for the people to forget history as he had forged it.

Anwar also appears as if memory loss has affected him, for all that he had claimed Dr Mahathir had done to him before. For 18 years they could not see eye-to-eye, but now they are seen shaking hands and smiling. Dr Mahathir seems desperate to act against all government agenda and action.

His support for Anwar's legal action to oppose the National Security Council Act can only be deemed as being driven by purely political motives.

After having "rectified" four errors he had made during his time in charge, a time said to have been a "golden" one, whether Dr Mahathir will furnish any further confessions remains to be seen. What is certain is that history will show Dr Mahathir as a statesman with many weaknesses and mistakes.

The writer is an Umno Supreme Council member, member of parliament for Kuala Selangor and Fisheries Authority Malaysia chairman