

Khairy: Unwise to stop Dr M from speaking up

KUALA LUMPUR: It may not be wise to stop Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad from speaking in public as the former prime minister could use it as ammunition against his critics.

Former health minister Khairy Jamaluddin said while there was a need to put a lid on hate speech, the matter should be better managed to prevent it from blowing up.

He raised questions about the Malay Proclamation event, of which Dr Mahathir was one of the speakers. The event, however, was cancelled three times by different venue owners.

“As opposed to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim’s brand of being a leader for all, Dr Mahathir has always been known as a Malay nationalist while still taking care of the non-Malays.

“There was no reason for us to believe that Dr Mahathir would incite racial sentiment at the event,” Khairy said in an episode of the Keluar Sekejap podcast with former Umno information chief Shahril Sufian Hamdan.

He said while some leaders stayed away from politics after retirement, “Dr Mahathir is not going anywhere” and he would continue to speak up on issues involving Malays.

“The more you shut him down, the more he will exploit this.”

Dr Mahathir accused Anwar of being a dictator following the cancellation of the Malay Proclamation event.

In response, former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and several politicians pointed to Dr Mahathir’s administration’s use of the Internal Security Act, which saw many leaders being detained without a trial.

“Dr Mahathir’s statement accusing Anwar as a dictator is ironic. It’s rich coming from him when he also had limited freedom of speech,

“(On the other hand), we have to scrutinise what can be discussed and what cannot. In this instance, we don’t even know the contents of the Malay Proclamation event,” Khairy said.

The sixth episode of the weekly podcast focused on the culture wars in Malaysia. The topics covered included the PKR congress, the “Jom Ziarah” issue and Tan Sri Michelle Yeoh’s win at the Academy Awards.