

Mahathirism is dead and gone, says Dr M
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PETALING JAYA: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he is actively campaigning for Umno and the Barisan Nasional in the general election but the era of Mahathirism is no more.

Debunking claims by DAP stalwart Lim Kit Siang that Mahathirism stoked racial fears and went against decades of nation building, the former prime minister said it was just a figment of Lim's imagination.

The former leader added that Mahathirism was dead and gone and there was no need to fear it.

Lim had said in response to earlier remarks by Dr Mahathir that he did not hate the former prime minister as a person but was only against the Mahathirism policies that allegedly stoke racial fears and went against nation-building efforts.

"I wonder why Kit Siang is so afraid of me, what he calls Mahathirism.

"I don't know what is Mahathirism but obviously it conjures in the mind of Kit Siang something fearful.

"So, he has declared his intention to fight Mahathirism," the country's longest-serving prime minister said in his latest blog posting yesterday.

"I don't care whether he destroys Mahathirism or not. It is an exercise in futility as Mahathirism is a figment of his imagination.

"He should not be afraid of this toothless tiger, figuratively speaking," he said, adding Mahathirism died in 2003 when Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi took over as prime minister.

Dr Mahathir said while Abdullah's successor, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, was friendlier, the current Prime Minister was "not that close to me".

Furthermore, he added, Najib had his own team of advisers. "His policies are his own."

Dr Mahathir admitted that he was actively campaigning for Umno and the Barisan, saying it was time to return the favour.

"I became prime minister because Umno and the Barisan backed me strongly.

"I owe a debt of gratitude to them. And that gratitude can only be manifested through helping them to be accepted by the people and to win," he said, adding he would go all out for his son, Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir, should he be chosen as a candidate.

He said he could now back Mukhriz as he was no longer in a position of power.

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