

**Kit Siang says does not hate Dr M but rejects 'Mahathirism'**  
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**By Lisa J. Ariffin**

KUALA LUMPUR, July 7 — Lim Kit Siang today denied harbouring hatred for his long-time political rival Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, suggesting instead that he dislikes the influential leader's brand of politics.

In the escalating war of words between the political veterans, the DAP parliamentary leader continued to allege that Dr Mahathir has been working very hard to keep his "Mahathirism" alive in the ruling Umno through corruption and cronyism.

Lim also disagreed that former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was voted out of power for mistreating his predecessor Dr Mahathir, saying instead that Abdullah, or "Pak Lah", had lost in Election 2008 for failing to dismantle the Mahathir legacy of corruption, cronyism and abuses of power.

"He (Dr Mahathir has) stoked racial fears among the Malays with his warnings that Malays will lose power if Umno loses the next general election," the veteran politician said in a statement here.

Lim added that the country's longest serving prime minister had also further incited racial tension by claiming the coming 13th general election would be about race and that Chinese voters would be the kingmakers in the polls.

"(These) exhortations are not only untrue, most incendiary and highly provocative, but totally against five decades of Malaysian nation-building, his own Vision 2020 of Bangsa Malaysia and Najib Razak's 1 Malaysia concept," he said.

Dr M told an online portal yesterday that he "did not know why he (Lim) hates me so much." — file pic

The Ipoh Timor MP was responding to Dr Mahathir's exclusive interview with an online portal yesterday where the former prime minister had said he "did not know why he (Lim) hates me so much" and added that attacks from the opposition party would only bolster ruling government BN.

Despite retiring in 2003, Dr Mahathir continues to loom large over the Malaysian political landscape and has been seen as Barisan Nasional's (BN) lead campaigner of late, ahead of polls that must be called soon.

But Lim has repeatedly rubbished Dr Mahathir's assertions and in recent weeks, accused Umno of "playing a dangerous game of lies" by stoking fears that could split Malaysia along racial lines in its bid to win over Malay voters at the polls.

He said voters must choose between a government that promotes racial policies and one that espouses democracy, good governance and equitable economic practices in the coming general election.

Lim has also claimed that Najib's uncertainty in winning the next general election has resulted in "desperate" tactics by Umno leaders and strategists.

Today, Lim urged all Malaysian voters to unite and prove Dr Mahathir's assertions wrong.

"The return of Mahathirism is rejected conclusively and decisively to send out the clear message that the 13GE is not about race but about the future of a united, harmonious, just and progressive Malaysia," he said, adding "(where) corruption, cronyism and abuses of power are relegated to the dustbins of history".

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