

Street chaos if Pakatan loses GE13, Umno reps agree
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 28 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad was right to warn of chaos should Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lose the next general election, Umno leaders have said, agreeing with the former prime minister that the federal opposition has a penchant for hosting street protests to get its way.

Leaders met on the sidelines of Umno's 66th annual general assembly here and in Parliament also agreed that democracy must have its limits as it could lead to violence if abused.

Despite such assertions by those in Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), many ruling party officials will have trouble selling such a line to incredulous Malaysians who have seen trouble and violence caused by Malay right-wing group Perkasa and groups linked to the ruling party.

"Democracy must be controlled... there must be limitations. If we are too free and have no limitations, it puts our nation at risk as it could lead to unwanted things," Batang Sadong MP Nancy Shukri told The Malaysian Insider when approached in Parliament.

The politician from PBB, which is aligned with Barisan Nasional, said Dr Mahathir was accurate to predict that PR leaders were likely to stage more street protests should it lose its bid for Putrajaya in the coming polls, and said the government should be careful when approving such events.

She added that should PR win the polls, it would be difficult to advise its leaders of how such demonstrations could be detrimental to the country's stability and even the economy.

"After all, they were the ones who have been encouraging it," she pointed out.

In a luncheon talk during the Umno-organised International Forum 2012 two days ago, Dr Mahathir had warned that democracy does not guarantee the public safety and security as violence could ensue when groups rise to demand their rights.

The country's longest-serving prime minister spoke extensively on how parties would refuse to accept defeat when they lose during elections, and would abuse democratic processes to negate the results of such a poll.

He later predicted that should PR lose the coming election, Malaysia would likely be inundated with more street violence through public demonstrations, even heaping the blame entirely on its Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Dr Mahathir said that street demonstrations were Anwar's way of preparing for the elections, adding that "without Anwar, there are no demonstrations".

He also said the opposition has already begun setting the stage for unrest, pointing to how Malaysians have been rallied by pro-PR groups to rise and reject the results of the election should Barisan Nasional (BN) retain Putrajaya.

"They are creating an environment where people are being told that the next election will be unfair so people must be prepared to reject the result of the election and hold demonstrations and disrupt the economy and all that so they can gain power even after losing," he said.

Umno minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said Dr Mahathir had hit the nail on the head with his prediction, pointing out that the opposition was hosting street demonstrations even now.

"Even before the polls, there are protests. Tomorrow (after the polls), there will be more.

"It is not impossible that if they lose the polls, they will do this... so we should be more careful. Do not choose those who will only wreak havoc and cause tension because this country is peaceful," he said.

"If we respect the law and practice moderation, we will successfully maintain this peace," he added.

Johor Baru MP Tan Sri Shahrir Samad said he could not understand PR, pointing out that even those who won seats in the previous polls would join street demonstrations.

He said PR lawmakers should show respect to their constituents for electing them instead of demonstrating on the streets.

"If they are dissatisfied with Malaysia's democratic system, use Parliament to air their woes. Use the right channels to affect changes," he told The Malaysian Insider.

But Shahrir noted, however, that Malaysians were mature enough not to be swayed by the emotions raised during public protests, regardless of the objective of the events.

He was joined by Umno deputy minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, who said street demonstrations were nothing to fear.

"Why am I not worried? Because Malaysians have matured and we have laws that are sufficient," he said.

He disagreed with Dr Mahathir that democracy could breed violence, insisting again that Malaysians were ready to accept a more "progressive democracy".

The outspoken youth leader pointed out that Malaysia has survived through 55 years of independence and 12 general elections without much incident, save for two isolated incidents that he said was unlikely to repeat.

"In general, we can use democracy in a good way," he said.

There has been a spate of campaign violence over the past few years in opposition events and ceramahs by those linked to pro-government parties while protests and rallies have been largely peaceful until clamped down by the police.

Human rights activists including the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) have said peaceful assemblies and rallies should be allowed especially with new laws enacted to facilitate such events with suitable notice to the authorities.

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