

Utusan blames DAP for paper's offensive against Chinese
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By Syed Jaymal Zahiid

KUALA LUMPUR, May 8 — Utusan Malaysia today defended its incendiary frontpage headline "Apa Lagi Cina Mahu? (What more do the Chinese want?)" and continued to attack the DAP, claiming the party's alleged campaign to sow hatred against Barisan Nasional (BN) justified the newspaper's tone.

In today's edition, the Umno-owned Malay broadsheet carried several reports that sought to defend yesterday's headline, citing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's defence of the newspaper and his allegation that the Chinese had been swayed by the DAP's purported Chinese-centric politics.

Utusan's sister publication, Kosmo!, has also front-paged Najib's accusation against the Chinese-based opposition party. Both Utusan and Kosmo! also highlighted former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's claim that BN had scored badly in Sunday's polls because of a "Chinese tsunami", a term analysts have dismissed as an attempt to shape the Election 2013 results as a Chinese-versus-Malay vote.

In a column by senior editor Zulkifli Bakar entitled "Siapa mula provokasi dahulu? (Who started the provocation first?)", the writer claimed the DAP should be held responsible if chaos erupts, a statement that echoes past warnings of a possible repeat of the May 13, 1969 race riots.

"The DAP should not be evasive in this matter and attack Utusan Malaysia.

"And they must be ready to be responsible if the country erupts into chaos because it was them that started the extreme political provocation to influence the Chinese to reject BN," he said.

The writer continued to say that Utusan had chosen the controversial headline yesterday in reaction to the alleged DAP attempt to incite anger among "other races" including the Malays.

"Utusan is only questioning the DAP and the actions of its supporters because it is worried that the party's consistent provocation could spark a reaction from other races especially the Malays and this could create chaos," he said.

The police started investigating Utusan Melayu for sedition yesterday, hours after the Umno-owned daily sparked a nationwide uproar with its incendiary front page report seen to blame the Chinese for the BN's weaker score in Election 2013.

The police have also hauled up two bloggers, Papa Gomo and King Jason, for questioning said to be related to their recent posts seen as fuelling racial strife.

Politicians from both sides weighed in on the controversy but the issue has not shown any signs of abating.

Some politicians from the BN, such as Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah who lost his Temerloh seat, crossed the political divide to join his rivals from PAS and PKR in denouncing the

racially-provocative reports from Utusan, and cautioned it could hamper a national reconciliation proposed by Najib after polls on Sunday.

But the prime minister was seen as deflecting criticism against the broadsheet, claiming the predominantly-Chinese DAP had misled the Chinese into greater racial polarisation by making them think that voting the party would lead to a change of government.

"You blamed Utusan but you don't ask about the Chinese papers," Najib told a press conference today when asked how he plans to achieve national reconciliation if the daily kept harping on race issues.

He did not say what was objectionable in the Chinese-language newspapers.

Najib had alluded to a "Chinese tsunami" in an immediate speech just after midnight on Sunday when the Election Commission announced the BN as winners by a simple majority.

BN took a severe beating this round and lost more seats at both the federal and state levels compared to 2008, leaving it with only 133 federal seats and 274 out of the 505 total state seats despite wresting back Kedah from PR.

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