

Shahidan defends Najib's no-show at 1MDB forum

The Malaysian Insider

June 8, 2015

By Eileen Ng

A minister has defended Datuk Seri Najib Razak's no-show at Saturday's Nothing to Hide forum, saying the prime minister was just adhering to a directive from the inspector-general of police that the event be cancelled on the grounds of "public order and national harmony".

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said Najib should not be faulted for not showing up at the dialogue session on debt-laden 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

"It was not Pekan's fault, he was prepared to attend that day but the IGP had directed that he should not attend," he said, referring to Najib via the prime minister's parliamentary constituency.

Najib was scheduled to attend the highly anticipated forum organised by SukaGuam but backed out on the advice of Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar who ordered the forum be cancelled on the grounds of "public order and national harmony".

The event was postponed and former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad instead took to the stage before police stopped him from addressing more than 1,000 people at the venue.

Observers said Najib's no-show at the forum, where his supporter-turned-critic Dr Mahathir was present, undermined his credibility and damaged his reputation.

They said despite security concerns, the prime minister, who only a day earlier had declared that he had "warrior spirit", should have proved his mettle by engaging his critics and answering questions on current issues, especially on matters surrounding 1MDB.

Shahidan told Datuk Mahfuz Omar (PAS-Pokok Sena) he conveyed the same answer to Dr Mahathir when he met the elder statesman in Kota Kinabalu recently but, he said, Malaysia's longest serving prime minister merely smiled in response.

Mahfuz had during Question Time earlier derided Najib's absence from the forum, mocking Najib's Bugis warrior lineage.

"Some people claim they are Bugis warrior, but are afraid of a 90-year-old person, so how can they claim to be Bugis warrior, from a warrior lineage. This is a 90-year-old we are talking about," he said. – June 8, 2015.

Copyright © 2015 Edge Insider Sdn Bhd

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/shahidan-defends-najibs-no-show-at-1mdb-forum>