

Dr Mahathir: UMNO's anniversary bash a 'sandiwara'

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By V Anbalagan

An extravagant show lacking substance with people attending given money and transport, says the former long-time UMNO leader.

KUALA LUMPUR: Former UMNO president Dr Mahathir Mohamad has described his ex-party's 71st anniversary celebration last night as an extravagant show that lacked substance.

"It was a sandiwara (drama) put up with adequate financing and the right background. (But) it does not mean anything," he said.

Mahathir said this in response to a veiled attack on him by current president and Prime Minister Najib Razak in his speech during the rally at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium here.

The former prime minister left the party in 2015 after accusing Najib of financial misconduct over the 1MDB scandal.

Mahathir, who is now chairman of Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM), the fourth member of the opposition Pakatan Harapan, said many people were forced to attend the rally.

"They were given transport, money – everything."

He said even university students were taken there despite them sitting for their examination.

"Of course, they were given certain exemptions. Why do they have to do it?" asked Mahathir, who was UMNO president and prime minister for 22 years from 1981.

At the event, Najib said a former leader's "unexpected" betrayal served as a lesson to the party.

Speaking to over 80,000 people gathered in the stadium, Najib, who declined to name Mahathir as the leader he was referring to, said he never expected "a statesman we once respected" to betray the party.

"(The former statesman) is willing to conspire to betray us, to take us down, and to declare war on UMNO and BN.

“He is now willing to hold hands and kiss his former enemy DAP just to serve his personal agenda.

“But we will not forget who had all this while taught us that DAP is a racist party. We will not forget who had led us for tens of years and had instilled hatred towards DAP, labelling it a racist chauvinist party that is against Islam and the Malays.

“This is why PAS considers DAP as the enemy of Islam, and UMNO sees DAP as the enemy of the Malays.”

Responding to this, Mahathir said he was with the DAP but the party did not own him.

“I am with DAP because we share the same objective (to oust) this kleptocratic government,” he added.

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