

Salleh on Mahathir's 'strange confession' today

Free Malaysia Today

May 24, 2017

The minister says the former PM 'confessed that it cost hundreds of millions to win a general election'.

PETALING JAYA: Communications and Multimedia Minister Salleh Said Keruak said former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad had made a strange confession today.

“He confessed that it cost hundreds of millions to win a general election.

“In fact, Mukhriz Mahathir said that the total actually comes to RM1.5 billion, which was also what the opposition alleged Mahathir had spent in the 1999 general election,” Salleh wrote on his blog today.

Coincidentally, Tourism and Culture Minister Nazri Abdul Aziz earlier today asked Mahathir to reveal how much was spent for elections during the 22 years he helmed the government and led BN to victory in five general elections.

Nazri posed this question as he said Mahathir was now questioning Prime Minister Najib Razak about money spent on elections and making him look like a crook.

Nazri said the money for the last general election came from the RM2.6 billion donated by the Saudi royal family and deposited in Najib's bank account.

Nazri said no laws were broken when BN spent the money to contest the 500 seats in the last election.

On another topic, Salleh also wrote on allegations by Mahathir that the Inland Revenue Board was going after opposition supporters.

The elder statesman had said he had been informed that those wanting to donate to Pakatan Harapan were likely to be harassed by the taxman.

Salleh said in 1999, businessmen known to be loyal to Anwar Ibrahim or to the opposition complained that they were facing discrimination and persecution.

“They alleged that Mahathir's government was forcing them to sell their companies or banks and that they were blacklisted by government departments and ministries.

“The way Mahathir is grumbling (now), he gives an impression that those who support the opposition are dishonest people who cheat the government by evading tax.

“That is why all the opposition supporters or financiers are being subjected to investigation involving income tax evasion.”

Salleh also mentioned about Mahathir claiming that Najib won the 1999 general election because of 2,000 military votes.

“Mahathir was also accused of winning his seat in the 1999 general election with 2,000 phantom votes.

“When the press asked him about this allegation during a press conference in the early hours of 30th November 1999, Mahathir never denied it and replied, ‘Even the opposition does the same thing’.”

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Source: <http://www.freemalysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/05/24/salleh-on-mahathirs-strange-confession-today/>