

'Desperate' Mahathir scraping bottom of barrel, says Salleh
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UMNO minister mocks former Prime Minister's U-turn from calls for Lim Kit Siang to be 'buried' in Gelang Patah in GE13, to saying DAP more Malaysian than other parties.

PETALING JAYA: Communications and Multimedia Minister Salleh Said Keruak has accused Dr Mahathir Mohamad of "scraping the bottom of the barrel" by praising the DAP to serve his own political interests.

He said the former Prime Minister had shown his desperation after he commended DAP as being more Malaysian than any government party last night, despite having criticised the party and its leaders as racist before.

"We can only assume that in his desperation Mahathir is scraping the bottom of the barrel," Salleh said in his blog entry today.

The UMNO treasurer said Mahathir, who is Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) chairman, realises that unless his party and Pakatan Harapan (PH) can get Chinese support they are going to be "wiped out" in the next general election (GE14).

He said this is because the party and the opposition coalition have already lost the support of the Malay electorate.

"It is most ironic that last night in his speech in Gelang Patah, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad did a complete U-turn from his April 2013 stance," he said, referring to Mahathir's remarks prior to the last general election on May 5, 2013 when DAP's Lim Kit Siang won the Gelang Patah parliamentary seat.

"In 2013, Mahathir called Lim Kit Siang a racist and asked that he be 'buried' in Gelang Patah.

"So, why this sudden and very drastic U-turn after more than 44 years of hating DAP?" Salleh said.

Speaking at a fundraising dinner in Gelang Patah last night, Mahathir had said: "I have explained in my blog that DAP is not a Chinese chauvinist party. It is a multiracial party that is open to all races. I also noticed that DAP is much more Malaysian than any other government party."

"That is why I now work with DAP, because I feel comfortable with DAP," he added.

Salleh said Mahathir, a former UMNO president, had been consistent in condemning DAP and its Chinese supporters for more than 44 years, from 1969 to 2013.

He said that during the run-up to the Kota Setar Selatan parliamentary race in Kedah in the general election of 1969, Mahathir had declared that he did not need Chinese votes and could win the seat based on Malay support alone.

“The Chinese then decided to vote for PAS and Yusof Rawa won instead,” Salleh said.

“Mahathir then retaliated by writing his anti-Chinese book, The Malay Dilemma, which was banned by the government,” he added.

He also said that soon after the 2013 general election, Mahathir had attacked Prime Minister and Umno president Najib Razak for “wasting time” on Chinese voters, reasoning that they would never vote for Barisan Nasional (BN).

Mahathir had said Najib should just focus on Malay voters who are the backbone of the support for UMNO, Salleh added.

Mahathir, 91, quit Umno in February last year shortly after his son Mukhriz was forced to resign as Kedah menteri besar, and co-founded PPBM in August in an attempt to take on UMNO to remove Najib from power.

On March 20 this year, PPBM was accepted by the PH presidential council as the fourth component of the opposition coalition, alongside DAP, PKR and Amanah.

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