

Zaid: Umno-PAS cordiality is money politics, not mature politics

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Former minister says the two parties are promoting an agenda that victimises the vulnerable while leaving the elite to escape punishment for wrongdoings.

PETALING JAYA: Former Umno minister Zaid Ibrahim says the “mature politics” tag frequently used by PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang to justify his party’s change of heart towards Umno bears more of a resemblance to “money politics”.

“They are not interested in protecting the vulnerable, only in pushing a backward ideology.

“Mature politics by right should strengthen Malay human capital, abolish poverty among Malays, and provide good education to Malays,” he told FMT.

Zaid, who is now a DAP member, said recent developments among the Malays showed that Umno and PAS were attempting to confuse the community with an agenda that prioritised shariah punishment, even as those in the upper echelons and the elite escaped action by Islamic authorities.

“This is all drama to confuse the people. How many in the upper echelons have been handed shariah penalties? Who among them have been punished with whipping for drinking alcohol, khalwat (close proximity) and stealing government assets?”

Hadi is among several senior PAS leaders who have lately been seen as being close with Umno. He has said on several occasions that the change of heart is part of the party’s culture of “mature politics”.

“This form of mature politics is not rigid, stubborn or calculative. It is politics that aim to befriend as many as possible and not to fight like a fanatic,” Hadi had written in an article.

Zaid said at a time when the Malays were experiencing economic and social weaknesses, Umno and PAS were devotedly promoting “non-concrete and irrelevant” policies, such as the construction of more mosques and the introduction of heavier shariah penalties.

“One third of university students are ignorant of universal human values,” he said, referring to the findings of a Malaysian Integrity Institute survey that showed a large number of public university students did not view as wrong the giving of gifts in return for favours.

“There is no distinction between right and wrong. These students don’t view bribes as something to be condemned.”

Zaid lamented that a majority of those involved in unemployment, pregnancy out of wedlock, debt and drug abuse were Malays.

He asked what PAS and Umno had done when so many Malays were weighed down by poverty and social problems.

“Actually, the politics of Umno and PAS is totally not mature. Instead, we can term it as cheap and shallow politics, which does not demonstrate the strength of their cause but only the strength of money and power.”

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