

Nazri: Mahathir only one capable of declaring state of emergency

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By Nora Jaswa

Umno minister hits back at former PM for claiming BN will resort to such measures if it loses in GE14.

PETALING JAYA: Dr Mahathir Mohamad's claim that the Barisan Nasional (BN) government will declare a state of emergency and suspend Parliament if it loses marginally in the coming polls is actually his "back-up" plan, an Umno minister says.

"He is actually stating out loud something he would have done if the same fate had befallen him in the 1999 general election.

"We have never declared a state of emergency. He is the only one capable of doing so," Nazri Aziz told FMT.

In the 1999 general election, BN only managed to secure 148 parliamentary seats at the height of the Reformasi movement, which was sparked by Anwar Ibrahim's sacking as the deputy prime minister a year earlier.

Yesterday, Mahathir, in a blogpost, alleged that the ruling coalition would resort to such measures and refuse to admit defeat.

The PPBM chairman said the opposition would be accused of cheating and the government would declare a state of emergency without presenting any evidence.

"The bullies of the BN will be ready to create instability," he said in his blogpost.

Malaysia's longest-serving prime minister also claimed that BN might offer monetary incentives to opposition MPs to cross over should they lose the election.

He went on to accuse Prime Minister Najib Razak of handing out "large amounts of money" to buy support.

Mahathir added that efforts were already underway to woo his party's Youth leaders through the distribution of "money and foodstuffs", taking advantage of events held during the fasting month.

Nazri, however, dismissed Mahathir's outburst, saying it was malicious in nature as Mahathir had a bone to pick with Najib.

Nazri, who is also an Umno supreme council member, pointed out that it was during Mahathir's time as prime minister that Ops Lalang was carried out.

The controversial crackdown in 1987, which was carried out on the grounds that the government wanted to prevent a race riot, saw the arrest of 106 people, including NGO activists, students, opposition politicians, artists and others who were detained without trial under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

"Remember, the government's Ops Lalang operation last time was under Dr Mahathir's prime ministership? No such measures were ever taken under Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Najib," Nazri said.

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