

Dr M and KJ bury hatchet with T-shirt

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There was once when Dr Mahathir Mohamad had remarked that in politics, friends do not remain friends forever while foes do not remain foes forever either.

During his winding-up speech at the Umno general assembly in June 1998, Mahathir, who was party president at the time, told delegates he had mentioned this to then number two Anwar Ibrahim.

Three months later, Mahathir sacked Anwar.

After he relinquished his post in 2003, Mahathir was succeeded by Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, whose advisers during his short-lived tenure comprised an ambitious Oxford-trained youth, who later became his son-in-law.

It is an open secret that Mahathir and Khairy Jamaluddin have an axe to grind with each other, with the former blaming the latter for his father-in-law's electoral misadventure in 2008.

He was also vexed that Abdullah, on the behest of his advisers, attempted to dismantle his economic legacy and grandiose projects, such as the "crooked bridge" between Malaysia and Singapore.

Last month, veteran newsman A Kadir Jasin set tongues wagging when he named Khairy as having the potential to be deputy prime minister.

The endorsement came as a surprise because the former New Straits Times Group editor-in-chief is known to be close to Mahathir.

Now, it appears that the feud is over and the pair have settled their differences, at least as far as an event in Putrajaya this afternoon was concerned.

On the same page

Both Mahathir and Khairy, who is also youth and sports minister, shared the same stage when launching the new logo for the upcoming Le Tour De Langkawi - a gruelling 10-day international bicycle race across Peninsular Malaysia conceived by Mahathir in 1996.

Apart from trading smiles and handshakes, the "Kodak moment" came when Mahathir helped Khairy put on the official jersey, which seemed to be a rather tight fit for the latter.

Even after Mahathir played an instrumental role in ousting Abdullah, ties between the

statecraft master and greenhorn politician remained on rocky ground.

Things took a turn for the worse when Khairy defeated Mahathir's son Mukhriz as well as former Selangor menteri besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo to become Umno Youth chief.

Despite this, Khairy was put in cold storage while Mukhriz was made a deputy minister, a move which was attributed to Mahathir exerting pressure on Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

The Umno Youth leader was only named a minister after retaining his post in the last party polls while Mukhriz is now the Kedah menteri besar.

As Mahathir said, foes and friends are not permanent in politics. The question is, should others in Umno be concerned about this unprecedented twist?

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