

Dr M may lead new party, to join forces with Pakatan
MalaysiaKini.com
July 12th, 2016
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More than a decade after stepping down as prime minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad might return to active politics in a bid to vanquish his latest foe, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

The 91-year-old medical doctor-turned-politician could spearhead a new political party, comprising former Umno members.

According to former Batu Kawan Umno vice-chief Khairuddin Abu Hassan, a meeting would be held with Pakatan Harapan leaders to discuss the matter.

"We will meet them on Thursday to talk about facing the next general election. We are considering the formation of a new party to be headed by Mahathir," he told *Malaysiakini*.

Khairuddin (*photo*) also claimed that the response from the opposition has been overwhelming thus far.

"We will join forces with Harapan to fight wrongdoings, corruption, right the leadership of this country, and implement institutional reforms," he said.

The mulling of a new party comes weeks after former deputy premier Muhyiddin Yassin and Mahathir's son Mukhriz were sacked from Umno for working with the opposition.

Muhyiddin has said he is considering setting up a new political platform.

However, Khairuddin said both Muhyiddin and Mukhriz would be absent from Thursday's meeting at the Perdana Leadership Foundation in Putrajaya, as they are currently overseas.

He added that former Umno vice-president Mohd Shafie Apdal has also been invited to the meeting.

Shafie quit Umno two weeks ago after he was suspended by the party's supreme council.

Mahathir and the opposition have been working together under the Save Malaysia movement to oust the prime minister.

However, the campaign appeared to be ineffective and the recent twin by-elections in Sungai Besar and Kuala Kangsar saw BN securing thumping victories despite Mahathir declaring the contests as a referendum on Najib's leadership.

Malaysiakini learned that the opposition is divided on whether Mahathir should be leading the charge.

Some believe it is inappropriate for the former premier, who has been accused of numerous misdeeds and abuse of power, to be leading the opposition whose clarion call is reform.

However, there are those who argue that the fractured opposition is in dire need of leadership and direction, which Mahathir can provide.

Recently, jailed former opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim also penned a scathing letter, warning PKR leaders of the dangers of working with Mahathir.

Meanwhile, former law minister Zaid Ibrahim claimed to be in the dark about the formation of a new party.

"I have been invited for Thursday's meeting, but I don't know the agenda," he said.

Asked if he would join the party if it is formed, he replied: "I will help any political party which wants to see reforms in the country. I will only be a supporter."