

## **Dr M: Muhyiddin has adopted Najib's strategy, abandoned principles**

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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he could not work with his former ally Muhyiddin Yassin because the latter had abandoned his principles and adopted the same strategies as Najib Abdul Razak.

“(Muhyiddin) has adopted the kind of strategy that Najib had, undermining all those who are against him.

“How can I accept Muhyiddin like that?” Mahathir had said, as reported by Singapore’s The Straits Times yesterday.

He also said that Muhyiddin, who is the current prime minister, was willing to work with Najib because “politics is more important than principles”.

Muhyiddin was formerly the Umno deputy president when Najib was the party president and prime minister.

He was sacked from the party in 2016 after criticising Najib's involvement in the 1MDB financial scandal. Around the same time, Mahathir also quit Umno, the party he once led for 22 years, in protest against Najib and the 1MDB scandal.

Mahathir and Muhyiddin, along with several others, later co-founded Bersatu and joined forces with Pakatan Harapan and successfully defeated the BN administration under Najib's leadership in the 2018 general election.

However, the Harapan government fell in February this year after a coup which saw Muhyiddin taking Bersatu out of the coalition to form the Perikatan Nasional (PN) government, along with BN, PAS and several MPs who defected from PKR.

Meanwhile, Mahathir resigned as prime minister and was later sacked from Bersatu. He has since gone on to form another new party called Pejuang.

'Corruption making a comeback'

Mahathir said he refrained from making any comments for three months after the new PN government was formed but felt he needed to speak up again as the corruption he fought against was making a comeback.

Under Muhyiddin's PN administration, a number of politicians have received

various political appointments.

The opposition has also criticised Muhyiddin's cabinet as being bloated, with 70 positions as opposed to the previous 55 under the Pakatan Harapan government.

Critics have said the prime minister was rewarding his supporters with positions and appointments in an effort to maintain his hold on his razor-thin majority in the Dewan Rakyat.

However, Mahathir himself was often accused of cronyism and nepotism during his tenure as prime minister.

Dismissing these allegations, he said his government helped a lot of people, whether or not they were familiar to him.

"Hundreds and thousands of them were helped. Some of them actually took advantage and are doing well. But the moment somebody succeeds (the accusation is) that is my crony," he said.

Though Mahathir is adamant against reconciling with Muhyiddin, whom he had once said had "betrayed" him, the 95-year-old also acknowledged that the fractured opposition is in no shape to challenge Muhyiddin right now.

The opposition is split into camps over their prime ministerial candidate, with opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim claiming on Sept 23 that he had gained enough support to form a new government.

But Anwar has not backed up this claim so far, and he has yet to meet with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to present the numbers.

“Anwar has a lot of people who are against him. If I am not accepted, many (of my supporters) will pull out so he will not have the majority.

“Now he claims he has the support of 20 to 30 MPs, but everybody has denied this,” Mahathir said.

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