

**After 'closed front door', Dr M says he won't count on 'backdoor' PN**

**Malaysiakini**

**03 June 2021**

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Dr Mahathir Mohamad has used a cryptic social media post by Defence Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob to take a jab at Perikatan Nasional's (PN) legitimacy.

Yesterday, speculation was rife that Ismail Sabri wanted to signal his frustration over how many factories had been given approval to operate despite the total lockdown.

He had posted a picture of himself closing the door of his office with the caption "I have closed the front door but..." plus a dejected-looking emoji.

In an online press conference this evening, former prime minister Mahathir criticised PN for its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.

He opined that the emergency had thus far failed to meet its objective, evidenced by how infections were now four times higher than when the proclamation was

made in January.

Asked about Ismail Sabri's post, Mahathir dismissed PN's credibility as it was a "backdoor" government.

"With (Ismail Sabri's) statement, he is from a party that entered from the backdoor.

"If the front door is closed, perhaps the backdoor is still open. If it is open, maybe there is room for discussions or other things.

"We can't count on them because they didn't follow the rules. When you go into someone's house, you should enter from the front door," he said.

PN came into power in March 2020 after the Sheraton Move coup ended the democratically-elected Pakatan Harapan administration.

Ismail Sabri, who is from Umno, has since dismissed claims that his post reflected any dissatisfaction.

International Trade and Industry Minister Azmin Ali, who oversees approval letters to businesses, urged for the public to stop speculating on his colleague's

comment.

He also denied there was friction between them, saying he was supporting his fellow cabinet members in carrying out their responsibilities.

Ismail Sabri is the face of the government's efforts to enforce Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs) and security measures.

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