

## **Mahathir's century-old 'pro-Malay' move leaves Kit Siang feeling blue**

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After decades of political jousting and accusing each other of racism, Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Lim Kit Siang's opposing ideologies found a common ground, or rather, foe - Najib Abdul Razak.

However, this unprecedented cooperation came apart at the seams soon after securing a historic win in the 2018 national polls. The Pakatan Harapan government collapsed after 22 months.

With the next general election looming, Mahathir announced that he is building a new army to wage war against Umno. However, only Malays and bumiputera would be recruited.

And now Lim, 81, is distraught that Mahathir, 97, has come full circle.

"I feel a great sadness that after nearly 100 years in Malaysian politics, Mahathir has only moved from pro-Malay to pro-Malay when he announced a new Malay movement - Gerakan Tanah Air (GTA) to fight Umno in the 15th general election.

“I feel great sadness because it is a retrograde step, which is a blow to Vision 2020 and the concept of Bangsa Malaysia,” rued the DAP veteran in a statement this evening.

Recalling Mahathir’s book titled ‘Capturing Hope’ after the Sheraton Move, Lim said he accepted the nonagenarian’s definition that pro-Malay does not mean being against other races, but there are others who defined this as Malay first or against non-Malays.

“But it is very sad that Mahathir has come full circle, that he has done what he had criticised and instead formed GTA.

“Mahathir said that GTA consists exclusively of Malay and bumiputera but it also aims to fight for the interest of all races,” he added.

With Malaysia poised to celebrate its 65th anniversary in a month, Lim described Mahathir’s move as a step in the wrong direction for a country with a plural society.

### **‘Mahathir no longer relevant’**

At present, GTA comprises Pejuang, Parti Perikatan India Muslim Nasional

(Iman), Parti Barisan Jemaah Islamiah Se-Malaysia (Berjasa), and Parti Bumiputera Perkasa Malaysia (Putra).

Mahathir said the movement welcomed the participation of NGOs, individuals and professional groups as well.

“We hope to get support from the people, especially Malays, because Malays are the ones doubtful of their future,” he added.

GTA aims to contest in 120 parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia.

However, certain pundits believe that the movement would not be able to make an impact in GE15. Furthermore, Mahathir’s popularity has also waned.

His greatest political nemesis, Najib, who underestimated Mahathir’s influence in the last general election, had again dismissed his predecessor-turned-successor as no longer relevant.

Najib pointed out that Pejuang failed to win any seats in the Johor state election in March despite Mahathir joining the campaign trail.

“The place where the grandfather (Mahathir) campaigned in, Ayer Hitam, also

lost the deposit, which means he's no longer relevant," he said.

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