

Rafizi: Dr M did not bring in Malay votes, no need to work with him

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PKR deputy president Rafizi Ramli is adamant that there is no need for Pakatan Harapan to work with Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the forthcoming 15th general election (GE15) to garner Malay support.

Contrary to popular perception, Rafizi said that based on his data, the former prime minister did not bring in Malay votes for the coalition in the previous election.

“(Back then) it was felt that Mahathir could bring Malay support and I tracked that number every month since 2016.

“There was nothing that suggested having Mahathir onboard brought a wave of Malay support (for Harapan),” Rafizi told Malaysiakini in an interview at the PKR headquarters last Saturday, Oct 29.

The Malay support figure for Harapan, he said, remained stagnant for a few

months after Mahathir and Bersatu joined the coalition in 2016.

It only started to pick up towards the end of 2017, he added.

“But we really started to see the swing in only the last three weeks of the election, so it’s not actually about Mahathir or anyone.

“It is a cumulative work of two to three decades of convincing the public that there can be a better government with a better plan for the country,” Rafizi said.

Dr M’s ‘smart’ move

The former Pandan MP pointed out that it was clear from the opposition coalition’s performance throughout the previous general elections that they were gaining traction among the rakyat.

Mahathir was smart enough to realise the coalition's potential at that time, he said.

“Mahathir is a seasoned politician. He knew that at the rate things were going, especially after 2013 when Pakatan Rakyat won the popular vote, it was a matter of time before these people (the opposition) pushed and crossed the line.”

While he was not against the idea of being inclusive, Rafizi stated that he had always been against allowing Bersatu to join Harapan from the very beginning.

Rafizi only wanted them to maintain an electoral pact with the Malay party, as he said Bersatu did not fit in with the image of Harapan.

As such, when asked whether there was a chance or need for Harapan to work with Mahathir again in GE15, Rafizi gave a resounding no.

This came after Amanah's communications director Khalid Abdul Samad said he was confused over Harapan's decision not to work with Mahathir's new party Pejuang.

Khalid said his party has always maintained that all opposition parties should work together for the forthcoming general election.

"As you know, Pejuang chairperson Mahathir has made an appeal to meet up with Harapan but, unfortunately, the Harapan leadership decided against it.

"For something that I cannot understand, there is a strong rejection, particularly from PKR," Khalid said.

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