

**BN's running out of time with Lee's defection: Dr M  
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Dr Mahathir Mohamad may not be in the country but he is nevertheless following the latest political developments in Malaysia very closely.  
MCPX

mahathir hulu langat 120408 press conference  
In a letter written sent to Malaysiakini today, the former prime minister said that the recent decision by Gerakan leader Lee Kah Choon to take up key posts in the DAP-led Pakatan Rakyat government shows that "the window of opportunity" is closing fast for the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition.

"Unless drastic actions are taken now, there would be no time to rehabilitate BN and Umno, and indeed all the other BN component parties, for the next election," said Mahathir, who is in United Kingdom over the past one week.

"To lose once is bad but to lose a second time in Malaysian election is an unmitigated disaster."

lee kah choon and lim guan eng penang  
Lee, a former Gerakan vice-president, raised heckles from BN leaders after he accepted the offer from Penang chief minister Lim Guan Eng to become a director of the Penang Development Corporation (PDC) and InvestPenang.

In the midst of the furore, Lee quit the party.

Mahathir considered the defection as a disturbing sign for BN.

"Supposing the opposition are smart enough to provide good government, to look after the interests of the ordinary people, to lead a spartan life like not flying in chartered planes when going to Kuala Lumpur or taking excos and divisional heads on jaunts to foreign countries, then those people who voted for the opposition out of anger against the BN in 2008, would transfer their loyalty permanently to the opposition.

"When that happens BN, Umno and other component parties can forget about recapturing the states lost to the opposition. Their turncoat members (saboteurs as they are classified by Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) will remain turncoats and will actively work against the BN at the next election."

For Mahathir, there's only one solution. He has repeatedly said so, including last week's 'Hard Talk' interview on BBC - stop supporting his successor-turned-nemesis Prime Minister Abdullah.

The choice is yours, he told BN leaders. Mahathir is expected to return to Kuala Lumpur on Thursday.

**The following is his letter in full:**

The recent decision of a senior Gerakan leader to take a job under the DAP government of Penang should not be taken lightly by the Barisan Nasional if it wishes to survive and regain support of its members and supporters.

The Gerakan leader may be motivated by a genuine desire to work for the good of Penang and Malaysia. But it may also be because loyalty to BN is now based on personal gains or fear of punishment of some kind.

This is especially so among the leaders. There is no genuine love for the objectives said to be the *raison d'etre* for the party's existence. They are all fighting to get a piece of the cake that the party would be able to distribute when it wins elections. They could become ministers or menteri besars or deputy ministers or speakers. They could get contracts or licenses, APs (approved permits), etc.

When the party loses these will not be forthcoming. The reason for supporting the party would disappear.

The rank-and-file on the other hand stands to gain nothing, win or lose. The party is not any longer for the general good of the country but only for lining the pockets of the leaders. So why should the ordinary members help the leaders to line their pockets.

The party can keep on making promises but the members know that these promises are empty.

Supposing the opposition are smart enough to provide good government, to look after the interests of the ordinary people, to lead a spartan life like not flying in chartered planes when going to Kuala Lumpur or taking excos and divisional heads on jaunts to foreign countries, then those people who voted for the opposition out of anger against the BN in 2008, would transfer their loyalty permanently to the opposition.

When that happens BN, Umno and other component parties can forget about recapturing the states lost to the opposition. Their turncoat members (saboteurs as they are classified by Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) will remain turncoats and will actively work against the BN at the next election. To lose once is bad but to lose a second time in Malaysian election is an unmitigated disaster.

The window of opportunity will close pretty soon. Unless drastic actions are taken now, there would be no time to rehabilitate BN and Umno, and indeed all the other BN component parties, for the next election. When this happens and BN is totally defeated, the leaders who mismanaged the BN will go down in history as betrayers of the parties which had so successfully defeated the Malayan Union, gained independence for the country and developed it to what it is today.

The leaders still have a choice. Continue supporting a person under whom the BN and its component parties were defeated or stop being self-serving and return to the true national struggle. You may gain something for yourself personally today but your children and grand children will pay a terrible price.

The choice is yours.

Dr Mahathir Mohamad