

Dr M to Umno: Back Abdullah at your peril
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Dr Mahathir Mohamad has once again asked Umno members to desert his handpicked successor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi - in the aftermath of the Permatang Pauh by-election defeat.
MCPX

In his latest blog entry, Mahathir said party members and leaders must accept that under Abdullah's stewardship, support for Umno and Barisan Nasional has dropped even more than at its post-general elections nadir.

mahathir pc 260608 05 "You can continue supporting Abdullah as party president, but the people won't support Umno because it has become a tool for Abdullah and his family.

"When the 13th general election looms, the people will remove Umno and Barisan because it is the only way they can remove Abdullah... because Umno and Barisan is unwilling to act, the people would have to act," he said.

Yesterday, Umno's Arif Shah Omar Shah was trounced by PKR supremo Anwar Ibrahim in a by-election preceded by tumultuous campaigning, which returns the former deputy prime minister to Parliament as leader of the opposition.

The seat was vacated by Anwar's wife Dr Wan Azizah Ismail earlier this month.

Anwar managed a higher majority than his wife, a clear signal that his support has not waned despite the best efforts of the BN election machinery and leaders.

Voters' dilemma

According to Mahathir, Malay and non-Malay voters did not want to vote for Anwar but were even less inclined to vote for BN.

This is the dilemma faced by Malaysian voters, he added.

abdullah ahmad badawi pak lah pc 060607 smiles "The BN candidate was good, but if he won, Abdullah would declare himself the winner and claim that support for BN and himself had returned. He would also claim that BN's support was restored under his leadership.

"The message which the Malay, Chinese and Indian voters wanted to send were in vain, because Abdullah has no ears to listen, no eyes to see," he said.

Mahathir said the Permatang Pauh result has left Umno members with only two options - stay loyal to Abdullah and risk losing the next general election, or stay loyal to the party.

"Umno must remember that votes from loyal members alone are insufficient to ensure victory. To win, Umno candidates need votes from non-party members, Chinese and Indians," he said.

Mahathir also predicted that the mainstream media would 'spin' the by-election results to

Abdullah's advantage and present a need for the prime minister to heal the party, by remaining in power.

anwar ibrahim casting his vote in permatang pauh by election polling day harakah pix 260808"Then Umno will unanimously re-elect Abdullah as the party president in December. This would weaken Umno and BN further," he added.

In a related development, Mahathir doubts that Anwar could be the next prime minister despite winning the Permatang Pauh by-election.

He believes that Anwar will not be able to get at least 30 Members of Parliament from BN to cross over to the opposition to form a simple-majority government.

"He (Anwar) may think that he can buy them but other bidders may have more money," he was quoted as saying by Bernama.

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