

Mahathir, wife back in Umno  
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Dr Mahathir Mohamad is now back with Umno after a two-hour meeting with new premier Najib Razak at his official residence in Putrajaya this morning.

He rejoined the party today together with his wife, Siti Hasmah and son, Mokhzani.

The former premier resigned in a huff last May 19 after a very public spat with his successor, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

NONETHis morning, Mahathir returned to the fold a happy man.

In a jovial mood, he submitted his application form to rejoin the party to Umno president Najib Abdul Razak. So did Siti Hasmah and Mokhzani.

His youngest son, Mukhriz who is Jerlun MP was also with the Mahathir clan at the function.

After the meeting with Najib in Putrajaya, Mahathir urged those who left the party with him to 'come home'. He reached out in particular to former Kedah MB Sanusi Junid and his followers in Kedah to rejoin Umno. Najib made a similar plea.

"I hope many other ex-Umno members will return to the party. I am prepared to help Umno regain the people's trust," he said.

Mahathir is actually the founder president of the current Umno, or Umno Baru (New Umno). The original Umno, founded in 1946, was declared illegal by the Kuala Lumpur High Court on Feb 4, 1988.

Mahathir Mohamad visits Najib Razak in PutrajayaAccording to a Najib aide, Mahathir's original membership number 0102 was retained. However, Mahathir is keeping mum on which branch he is keen to join.

New PM Najib earlier had a two-hour session with the statesman at the Deputy Prime Minister's official residence in Sri Satria, Putrajaya. Mahathir and wife arrived at about 9.50pm to meet Najib.

After the meeting, Najib and Mahathir called a joint press conference to announce the much awaited return of the Umno icon.

Najib also revealed that as soon as Mahathir's membership was accepted, the former premier will go down to campaign for the BN candidates in the three by-elections. Polling for the Bukit Gantang, Bukit Selambau and Batang Ai by-elections is on April 7.

"Dr Mahathir's presence and the other expected members would help strengthen Umno and Malay unity," he said.

Asked whether Mahathir would play a senior role in the new cabinet, Najib said he would seek advice from him along with recently retired PM Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He said Mahathir's return to Umno would strengthen the party and Malay unity.

### **Mahathir glad to rejoin Umno**

Meanwhile, Mahathir said he was happy to rejoin the party he once led and which he had always loved.

Mahathir Mohamad visits Najib Razak in Putrajaya "However, in the past few years, it had fallen off tangent somewhat and that was when I made comments and decided to leave the party.

"I love the party and would advise and give teguran (critics) if necessary for the betterment of the Malays," he said.

However, Mahathir said that he would continue to blog. He runs a blog called a popular site Chedet.com.

Asked on the significance of the situation where he had once rejoin Umno during the second premier Abdul Razak Hussein's time and now under new Premier Najib, Mahathir said it is just a coincidence.

"He (Najib) should have been accepting my children's or grandchildren's forms and not mine," he joked.

The nation's first PM Tunku Abdul Rahman sacked Mahathir, who had been vocal of Tunku's administration during the May 13, 1969 riots however, it was Abdul Razak who had brought him back on March 7, 1972.

To a question on how he feels BN will fare in the by-elections, Mahathir said it was too early to tell but was willing to pick a guess '50-50.'

Asked as to the prospect of facing his old nemesis namely de facto PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim, Mahathir replied sarcastically "Anwar who?"

"Oh, the one who wants to be the prime minister last Sept 16. Never mind, we will see," he said.

### **Najib's cabinet**

In another development, Najib said that he was still studying his new cabinet line-up and has not finalised plans.

"I will also seek advice from Abdullah and Dr Mahathir on the matter. As what I had emphasised during the Umno assembly - I would seek the opinions of party grassroots before arriving to a decision."

najib visit petaling street 040409 "It is difficult to make a decision as senior party members are busy out campaigning (in the three by-elections). Why is there so much interests in the cabinet," he asked the press.

To questions on whether he thinks the by-elections would be a referendum on him as the

new PN, Najib replied that he does not think so.

"I hope the voters would not be duped to such claims as they should think of their future. I feel their true future would be for voting BN," he said.

Najib visited Kuala Lumpur's Petaling Street this afternoon in the bid to burnish his image among the Chinese community.

Later, he continue his two-hour walking tour in Indian-majority Brickfields and Malay-majority Kampung Kerinchi as part of his attempt to touch base with the various ethnic groups in the city.

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