

Dr Mahathir: No deal with Najib on Mukhriz
Malaysiakini.com
April 8, 2008
Syed Jaymal Zahiid

Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he had not brokered a deal with Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak for the inclusion of his son Mukhriz in the cabinet.

He rubbished talks that he had canvassed for Mukhriz to be named in Najib's cabinet despite his youngest son losing the Umno Youth chief post to Khairy Jamaluddin.

He told a press conference held at his office in Putrajaya that he was not the sort to campaign or ask for special treatment for his son.

"Even though I am his father, I don't make that sort of deal, nor would I speak for, campaign or ask for special treatment for him. If he loses in the (party) elections, that is his business.

"I never placed my son in the government even when I could have when I was the prime minister, but I did not," Mahathir said.

He added that even when some Umno leaders had offered their constituencies to both his sons - Mukhriz and Mokhzani - but Mahathir said he did not condone this.

Speculations are rife that Najib would drop a bombshell by not picking Khairy to the cabinet and instead make Mukhriz a minister.

'Already been found guilty of corruption'

Mahathir has openly demanded that Najib not include Khairy in the cabinet citing his alleged corruption charges made by the Umno disciplinary board.

"If he is appointed, it would bring bad omen to BN as he has already been found guilty of corruption (by the party disciplinary board)," reasoned Mahathir.

bukit selambau khairy visit damaged houses after tornado 060409 04However, Najib could instead pick both Khairy and Mukhriz as deputy ministers as a compromise to appease both Mahathir's and Khairy's supporters in the party.

Even if the two Umno Youth rivals were appointed ministers, the former premier said he would still continue to "condemn" Khairy as he believed the latter's alleged corrupt reputation would only sully the cabinet and the government's image.

When asked who he thought should make it to the cabinet list, Mahathir said regardless of who they are, Najib has the duty to pick those who are not involved in any corrupt practices or seen to be corrupt.

Many new faces are expected to come into the picture apart from keeping the few leaders already known to be part of his camp in Umno.

Mahathir's spiteful speeches upset non-Malays

Meanwhile, Mahathir also dismissed claims that he had been a major factor behind the two BN defeats in the two by-elections in Bukit Gantang and Bukit Selambau.

"BN's vote did not decline, in fact it went up but not as much as PAS' votes lah," he said.

bukit gantang by election mahathir ceramah and luncheon 060409 02Many observers claim that Mahathir was one of the reasons behind BN's by-elections defeat, saying the former premier's spiteful speeches had influenced the non-Malay voters and fence-sitters to vote against BN.

Mahathir, however, conceded that the by-elections result show that the people have yet to change its mind about BN despite having a new leadership leading the ruling coalition.

"There are a lot of things that BN must do before the next general elections. It is difficult to change the people's minds. Najib must be firm in healing the image of BN, especially Umno," he said.

One of the ways to do this is to rid the government of corrupt leaders and practices, said Mahathir.

mca 60th anniversary chua soi lek and ong tee keat 030309 07He also said it was up to Umno to decide whether the proposal made by MCA for a second deputy prime minister post from the MCA is a feasible one.

"But I must remind them that it is their (Umno's) duty to consider the feelings of all other parties and not just MCA's," said Mahathir.

MCA leaders have claimed that should the new post be created, it would reflect the true nature of the country's population and this would tally with Umno's much publicised sloganeering of power sharing among the various races in the country.