

THE SUN

DATE: 20/05/2008

# PAS will welcome Dr M, says Nik Aziz

The Sun - 20/5/2008

» **Kedah Umno chief Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid** said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's resignation from Umno was akin to "*marahkan nyamuk, kelambu dibakar*" (burning the mosquito net because of being angry with the mosquito).

"Malays have already become split with three political parties (Umno, PAS and PKR) fighting for their interests. This action by him will cause Umno to become more disunited," he said.

» **MCA secretary-general Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan** told reporters in Ipoh Mahathir's decision would not help Umno and the BN. He hoped Mahathir would reconsider his decision because the BN was facing various challenges.

Ong, who is also the housing and local government minister, said he was saddened by the move. "Our country needs stability and not uncertainties. His decision will trigger adverse pressures on the people and foreign investors," he said.

» Leaders of opposition parties were startled by Mahathir's decision but welcomed it. In Kota Baru, **PAS spiritual adviser Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat** said although it caught him by surprise, he was the most happy man in the world by the decision as it would give PAS greater impetus to widen its political influence.

The Kelantan menteri besar said Mahathir was a statesman who was respected worldwide and a great leader who brought much progress to the nation.

He told reporters at his residence in Pulau Melaka, Kota Baru, he held Mahathir in high esteem for standing up to the West over the issue of Palestine and Israel.

Nik Aziz said PAS would welcome Mahathir to join the party as his knowledge and experience could help bring it to even greater heights.

» **DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng** said

Mahathir's move will prove to be a "great political earthquake" in Umno's existence.

"Mahathir's quitting will be the gigantic political earthquake besetting Umno after the political tsunami of March 8," he said.

"This internal rivalry is part of the intense power struggle of disparate vested interests within Umno.

"The real issue for Umno is not so much how this power struggle will play out. The real challenge will be between undertaking reforms to institutionalise democracy, uphold rule of law and combat corruption, and persisting in the tried and failed policies of mediocrity, crony capitalism and violation of basic human rights. This is a choice between Umno moving Malaysia forward or going backwards."

» A political analyst said Mahathir's sudden decision raised questions on the future of Malay politics.

He said the move could result in a level of chaos and complexity within the party and Barisan Nasional although it may not adversely affect national stability and the government.

**Prof Dr Ahmad Atory Hussein**, of the Law and Public Administration Faculty, Universiti Utara Malaysia, said whatever the real reasons for Mahathir's decision to quit Umno, it could not be taken lightly by the party leadership and government.

"Whether his decision to quit the party was because he was hurt that his views were no longer respected or he wanted the members to make a bold move towards the top leadership, to me the decision itself would have a big impact on Umno and the country," he told Bernama.

"The effect on Umno is obvious as Tun still has many loyal supporters. Imagine if all of them, although they are ordinary members, follow his action. I think Umno could be destroyed."