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Dr M: Opposition must unite against Barisan

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PUTRAJAYA: All opposition parties need to unite under one pact if they want to topple the Barisan Nasional Government, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

This includes PAS as well, the party that broke ties with DAP and PKR, said the chairman of Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia.

"This is to avoid three-cornered fights in the next election. If they do not do this, they will lose, like they always have for the past 59 years.

"In a three-cornered fight, the most likely winner is Barisan, so it must be avoided," he told reporters after receiving the official approval of the party at the Registrar of Societies (RoS) yesterday.

Also present were the protem committee members, led by Dr Mahathir as its protem chairman and protem president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Other protem committee members present included former Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir, former Langkawi Wanita Umno member Anina Saadudin and youth activist Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman.

Dr Mahathir said that working with PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is seen as his political nemesis, was "no issue".

"If I can work with (DAP adviser Lim) Kit Siang, then why can't I work with Anwar?" he said.

Earlier this week, Dr Mahathir met Anwar at the Kuala Lumpur High Court and shook hands.

It was the first time the two had met since he sacked Anwar as his deputy prime minister in 1998.

On the formal registration of Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia, Muhyiddin said the party was happy that the RoS had given its nod even though they were refused the preferred acronym "Bersatu".

"Their (RoS) reasoning is that there are many existing parties that have the word 'Bersatu' in their names. But if none of them use it as an official acronym, I do not see any problem in letting us use it.

"But we do not want to fight over this matter, as the approval of the party's registration is more important," said Muhyiddin.

Dr Mahathir said the party would hold its first general assembly and election by next year.

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On another matter, Dr Mahathir wrote on his blog about the controversy over the "haram" status of Langkawi's iconic eagle statue.

"So far, no Muslim has ever prayed before or worshipped the eagle. Destroying it will not make Malays more Muslim," he said.

Last week, Perak deputy mufti Zamri Hashim wrote in a daily that it was forbidden in Islam to make full-bodied statues of living creatures such as humans or animals, and it should be demolished.

Dr Mahathir said that with better education, numerous depictions of humans and animals, previously forbidden by Islam, were allowed.

"Today's Muslims are more intelligent. That is why they don't worship portraits or statues. They know these are not gods," he said.