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'Dr M will have hard time getting support'

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KUALA LUMPUR: Even with his status and influence, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's new party, Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia, will have trouble getting the people's support.

Umno veteran and member of parliament for Gua Musang, Tan Sri Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, said it



**Tan Sri Tengku
Razaleigh
Hamzah**

was clear that the opposition was not united and their leadership had no sure direction.

"A party that does not represent multiple ethnic groups will have difficulty getting support, especially with the younger generation whose education and exposure have made them more open-minded."

He said he was speaking from experience, having formed Semangat 46 in 1989. However, he said it was a different scenario for Parti Pribumi.

"Semangat 46 was formed because many Umno members were not allowed to rejoin the party. To avoid losing them to other parties, we formed Semangat 46.

"It was easier for us then because Umno was split from the top to the lowest positions, so we could form divisions but Parti Pribumi is starting from the ground as there is nobody to be pulled in," he said.

Acknowledging the former prime minister's influence, Tengku Razaleigh said the government would do its best to stop people from supporting the opposition.

"People join a political party to stand up for a right through majority votes but if they cannot do that, to ascertain the party's direction, it will be hard," he said regarding non-Bumiputera members not being allowed to vote and contest for positions in Parti Pribumi.

Former deputy prime minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin was reported as saying that non-Bumiputeras who joined the new party would be allowed only second-tier membership.

Although he thought it would be hard for Parti Pribumi to succeed, Tengku Razaleigh did not deny that it was a threat to Barisan Nasional.

"In politics, everything is a threat. I'm sure Umno leaders have given a lot of thought regarding Parti Pribumi. After all, they will face each other in the 14th General Election."

Asked whether Dr Mahathir had invited him to join the party, Tengku Razaleigh said the former had not.

"I think he knows that I will stick with Umno. I am an Umno man.

"I do not agree or follow everything that happens in the party but if I see anything wrong, I will bring up suggestions in the party," he said.