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Zahid: We won't stop Dr M from setting up party

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'LET PEOPLE DECIDE':
We will use what he taught us when he fought dissenters, says Umno vee

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BARISAN Nasional (BN) leaders and members will fight tooth and nail against the new opposition pact as it is what Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had taught them when he led the coalition.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said when Dr Mahathir helmed BN and the country, he would do whatever he could to topple his political nemeses.

"We will use what he taught us when he dealt with those who were against him," he said at a press conference here yesterday.

Zahid, who is also deputy prime minister, was commenting on Dr Mahathir's announcement that he would form a new political party.

On Thursday, the former prime minister said the new party would form a new pact with other oppo-

sition parties and the pact would operate as a single entity against BN to win the next general election.

Zahid, who is also home minister, said the Home Ministry would not stop Dr Mahathir from setting up a new political party as it was part of the democratic process.

"We will let people compare our (BN's) track record with theirs."

He urged BN component parties not to be too confident and to work hard to ensure the coalition remained in power after the next general election.

In **Nilai**, MIC president Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said Dr Mahathir was demeaning his status as a statesman by setting up a new party.

He said the former prime minister's opposition to BN, which he once led, could lead to his achievements and contributions to the country to be forgotten.

In **Kuala Lumpur**, Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said the formation of a new party would not undermine BN's strength.

"The people are aware that the

development in the country was due to the efforts of the BN government.

"Umno has been accepted by the people for a long time as a party that can develop the country with other BN component parties," he said after the Felcra Bhd Hari Raya open house here yesterday.

Umno Veterans Club secretary-general Datuk Mustapha Yaakub said the setting up of a new party could disunite the Malays.

"(Now, we have) Umno Malays, Pas Malays, PKR Malays and (Parti Amanah (Negara) Malays. If Dr Mahathir forms a party, then the Malays will be divided into five (factions). Malays who are now in the majority will become the minority.

"Dr Mahathir realises this, but in politics, the end justifies the means."

In **Kota Kinabalu**, the United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (Upko) said the proposed new opposition pact was nothing

new for a country that practised a parliamentary democracy.

Upko acting president Datuk Seri Wilfred Madius Tangau said the development was not a surprise for a

democratic country as everyone had the right to form a party.

"The people are also free to judge and choose which party they want to form the government and, in this case, the track record of the BN government is proven."

Wilfred said Dr Mahathir's decision to form a political party would reduce his standing from a statesman to a mere politician.

Wilfred, who is also science, technology and innovation minister, said Upko was confident that BN, with its impeccable track record, would remain the people's choice for many more years.

In **Malacca**, Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Seri Idris Haron said the formation of a new opposition pact by Dr Mahathir proved that the latter did not hold on to his past values and beliefs that no other party could lead the country better than Umno.

"Back then, he (Dr Mahathir) had in his speeches said no other party in the country could administer and manage a country full of complexity as best as Umno and BN.

"He (Dr Mahathir) added that other parties that claim to be able to administer the country were usually only temporary," he said at a Hari Raya open house by the Melaka State Development Corporation at the Malacca International Trade Centre in Ayer Keroh yesterday.



Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam



Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob