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Anwar to seek ex-DPM's opinion

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KUALA LUMPUR: Opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he will seek the view of Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin on the proposed opposition pact and party announced by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"We are waiting for Muhyiddin to decide because Muhyiddin is making the decisions. We look forward to engaging with them," Anwar said at the High Court here yesterday.

He said it was time for opposition parties to consolidate and work together.

Dr Mahathir had on Thursday announced the impending formation of a new political party as well as a new opposition bloc to take on Barisan Nasional (BN) in the next general election. The pact would comprise DAP, PKR and Parti Amanah Negara as its component members, leaving out Pas.

Simpang Pulai assemblyman and PKR Youth vice-chief Tan Kar Hing, however, was cautious with the new-found camaraderie with their former political foe.

He said PKR's willingness to work with Dr Mahathir did not mean it condoned the latter's past mistakes.

Tan said the most important thing now was to regain the voters'

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Analysts doubtful new party can gain support

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confidence in the opposition, which he said had been shattered by the withdrawal of Pas from the now defunct Pakatan Rakyat last year.

"We need to decide with Dr Mahathir a common manifesto and policies that the opposition had been championing, such as clean and fair elections, reformation of the judiciary and the release of Anwar."

Pas was also cautious, with president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang saying that it was not in a hurry to make a decision to join a new pact.

He said the party would let its political committee and Syura Council evaluate the policy and objectives behind the formation of the new pact.

He said it was paramount that the cooperation did not hinder the party's struggle for Islam and was not at the expense of Muslims.

"We view that the formation of the new pact is done in chaos. We will not board an ark that is in chaos, more so when the pact comprises a party that is against the struggle of Islam," he said at his residence in Kampung Rusila here yesterday.

He said Pas would cooperate with parties that were fair and wanted to transform for betterment.

Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) was also against joining the new bloc.

Its secretary-general, Sivarajan Arumugam, said aligning with Dr Mahathir was detrimental to civil society as most of the laws and policies that caused many social and economic issues today could be

traced back to his era.

"He remains unapologetic and unreformed. There is no benefit to the people as there are no clear alternatives given to them."

Political analysts are also doubtful that Dr Mahathir's new party and pact could gain traction with voters.

Political pundit Professor Dr Sivamurugan Pandian said the new party needed to overcome several challenges before upstaging BN.

"(The new party's) strength depends on how fast they can form branches and divisions. Time is not on their side as the general election could be held as early as next year."

He said the public wanted to know what the new party's political ideology was, besides the aim of ousting BN in the next general election.

Universiti Utara Malaysia's Professor Dr Azizuddin Mohd Sani said the new party's success depended on how many Umnò members it could attract.

"I am sceptical that this party will be able to gain strong support."

Universiti Putra Malaysia's Professor Dr Zaid Ahmad said the new party would not have enough time to prepare for the next general election, adding that forming another party would only give BN an edge.

Anwar was at the High Court to obtain leave to challenge the Pardons Board's dismissal of a petition to pardon him of a sodomy conviction and also against the Election Commission for denying his right of vote in the Permatang Pauh by-election on May 7 last year.