

Newspaper	THE STAR
Date	19 JULY 2016

# Sabah parties: It's not relevant

Groups not keen on Dr M's new coalition

By MUGUNTAN VANAR AND JOSEPH KAOS  
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**KOTA KINABALU:** Sabah Opposition parties are not keen on jumping into any new national coalition even as Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad plans to form a new party.

Both Parti Solidarity Tanah Airku (Sabah STAR) and Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) feel that such an Opposition coalition has no relevance to the interests of the state.

"It is a new coalition being proposed. I don't see any relevance for us in Sabah in terms of our autonomy rights," said SAPP president Datuk Yong Teck Lee.

The proposed coalition, he said, was just an extension of the Citizens Declaration movement launched earlier by Dr Mahathir and other national Opposition leaders.

"In the declaration, there was nothing for Sabah or Sarawak," he added.

Sabah STAR president Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan isn't enthusiastic either. "Wait and see what the development is in the weeks ahead. The party may only be active in the peninsula," he said.

STAR and others in the local coalition, said Dr Jeffrey, were more focused on organising themselves for the next general election instead of being distracted by the political developments surrounding Dr Mahathir.

Sabah STAR had, together with SAPP and Parti Cinta Sabah led by Tamparuli assemblyman Datuk Wilfred Bumburing, formed the state-based United Sabah Alliance (USA) in preparation for the next polls.

Former Umno vice-president Datuk Mohd Shafie Apdal talked about state rights during the announcement of his resignation from

**We have seen so many new parties being set up over the years, and they eventually suffer a natural death.**

Dr Wan Junaidi

the party, which was also attended by USA chairman Datuk Seri Mohd Noor Mansoor.

While Shafie's initial political posturing indicated that he might set up a party, he is now widely seen to be going along with the party talked about by Dr Mahathir.

In Putrajaya, Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, said although the former prime minister had every right to set up a new party, it would not receive the support of Sarawakians.

"In Sarawak, I can guarantee they will not succeed. They can even contest in my area if they want.

"In a democratic country, people are free to have their own political parties. At the end of the day, it depends on whether they will be supported by the people.

"Political parties are like coffee shops. If you do not have the support of the public, you cannot sustain the business and will have to close shop.

"We have seen so many new parties being set up over the years, and they eventually suffer a natural death," said Dr Wan Junaidi, who is the Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu MP for Santubong, Sarawak.