

Newspaper	NEW STRAITS TIMES
Date	12 JUNE 2016

Dr Mahathir backs PAN candidate for Sg Besar

NST - 12/6/2016

UNPRECEDENTED:

This is the first time ex-PM is campaigning against BN

**HARIZ MOHD
AND DAWN CHAN**
SUNGAI BESAR
news@nst.com.my

IN a desperate bid to bolster its electoral chances, Parti Amanah Negara (PAN) has roped in former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to campaign for it in the Sungai Besar parliamentary by-election.

Dr Mahathir, 90, yesterday announced his full support for PAN Sungai Besar candidate Azhar Abdul Shukur, who had signed the Mahathir-Kit Siang declaration.

He threw his support behind the opposition and used a DAP-led forum in Sekinchan to attack Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

"I am here to support the PAN candidate who has signed the declaration to oust the prime minister," said Dr Mahathir in a speech.

Political analyst Professor Dr Sivamurugan Pandian said Dr Mahathir's appearance was a clear indication of his friendly ties with DAP, PKR and PAN.

"He has indicated before that he is willing to work with the opposition for the sake of removing Najib. His presence in Sungai Besar yesterday is the clearest sign of this cooperation," he said.

The event, organised by DAP at a Chinese restaurant in Sekinchan at 10am, marked the first time Dr Mahathir had campaigned against Barisan Nasional in a by-election.

Prior to this, Dr Mahathir had used the declaration to denounce the government he once led for 22 years.

Dozens of opposition leaders joined Dr Mahathir at the event, including his old nemesis, DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang.

Other opposition leaders present were PAN secretary-general Mohd Anuar Mohd Tahir, former Selangor menteri besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, PKR vice-president Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin



and PKR's Tumpat member of parliament Datuk Kamarudin Jaffar.

Controversial Sarawak Report editor Clare Rewcastle-Brown also made an appearance via Skype.

However, conspicuously missing were other allies of the declaration, including former deputy prime minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Dr Mahathir's son, Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir said the results of the Sungai Besar and Kuala Kangsar by-elections would serve as a "referendum" to gauge the people's support for the government.

"We will not get the majority (in Parliament), even if we win both seats. But these by-elections are referendums. That is the main objective of the by-elections (for the opposition)."

Dr Mahathir also alleged that a victory for BN meant that the people were "tolerant of *dedak* (bribes)".

"Then, of course, the country will go to the dogs. This country is already bankrupt," he claimed.

Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Salleh Said

Keruak said Dr Mahathir's decision to campaign for the opposition was not surprising.

"This has been Dr Mahathir's modus operandi since 1970.

"He worked with the opposition for more than two years from 1970 to attack (former prime minister) Tunku Abdul Rahman and Umno because he disagreed with the latter.

"From 2006, he also worked with the opposition for more than two years to attack Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Umno because he disagreed with the then prime minister.

"And, now, since December 2014, he has been working with the opposition to attack Najib because he disagrees with him," Salleh told the *New Sunday Times* yesterday.



**Tun Dr
Mahathir
Mohamad**