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'Dr M confused in opposing BN'

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'INNER CONFLICT':
Don't be swayed by
his campaign for
PAN in by-election,
says Zahid



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TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad is campaigning against Barisan Nasional (BN) in the by-election here due to a conflicted "mind and soul", BN deputy chairman Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said yesterday.

He said Parti Amanah Negara (PAN) should not be blamed for dragging Dr Mahathir into its cam-

paign since it was the latter who was "confused".

"I cannot blame any party if he (Dr Mahathir) decides to support them, but I pity him as he is going through an inner conflict and is confused.

"I hope other people will be spared from this confusion and voters will not accept his campaign blindly," he said at a media centre here.

Despite Dr Mahathir's efforts in

campaigning against BN, Zahid said the coalition's performance in the by-election would not be affected.

"Many people could not accept his ideas, but they still sympathise with him.

"But when Dr Mahathir became allies with his former political enemies, they could not accept it."

Zahid said Dr Mahathir's campaign against BN showed that he had found himself at a political crossroads to prove his popularity.

"I believe BN supporters will continue (to support) as he (Dr Mahathir) had instilled the love and loyalty to the party when he was BN president. His statements and campaigns had gone viral, but I hope the public will not be influenced by his speeches."

On Dr Mahathir's statement, alleging that the Malays were supporting Umno blindly, Zahid said the former was "not himself when he

uttered the statement".

"Considering his age, I believe he had made a poor judgment. I hope he will still use the same language as he did back then, and may he be protected by God."

Despite his actions, Zahid said Umno was prepared to take Dr Mahathir back into the party provided that he was sincere to come back.

"Umno leaders are open-minded. The Supreme Council can discuss the matter. But I do not think he is willing to do it (return to Umno) at this point.

In **Kuala Kangsar**, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein expressed disappointment at Dr Mahathir's decision to campaign against BN in the two by-elections.

The defence minister said he did not understand why the former premier could make such a decision as he was among the most respected

leaders in BN.

"His (Dr Mahathir) action has made me very sad. However, I believe the Kuala Kangsar folk will not be influenced by his action.

"Young voters must reject politics of division and hatred, and help preserve national unity," he said in Kampung Masjid near here yesterday.

He said the opposition had also run out of ideas and had recycled old issues, which had been explained by the government.

"Their ceramah always focus on issues which are not related to the locals."

However, Hishammuddin said he was glad that all parties did not use religion and racial issues for their political mileage in both by-elections.

"I hope this trend will continue to ensure no untoward incidents occur and affect the national harmony."