

Newspaper
Date

New Straits Times
1 March 2016

A last-ditch bid to cripple party, say senior Umno leaders

NST- 1/3/2016

KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad quitting Umno is a last-ditch effort to cripple the party after failing to remove party president Datuk Seri Najib Razak, party leaders said.

Umno information chief Tan Sri Annuar Musa said Dr Mahathir's announcement was expected after he had failed to influence other Umno leaders to join his campaign against Najib.

"This is his latest strategy to cripple and kill off Umno. This is a last resort to defeat Najib.

"This approach is motivated by Dr Mahathir's past experiences, during which he readily sacrificed Umno for the sake of defeating his political enemies," said Annuar in a statement yesterday.

He said Dr Mahathir had "killed off" the Umno-led Kelantan government during the latter's struggle against political rival Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah in the 1980s.

"The Umno-led Selangor government was also sacrificed during Dr Mahathir's efforts to defeat Datuk

Seri Anwar Ibrahim. The Penang government also fell after he brought down Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi."

Annuar said Dr Mahathir's struggles against his political enemies had inadvertently served the three states to the opposition on a "silver platter".

"In other words, history has shown that Dr Mahathir has no qualms about giving the opposition power as long as he is able to defeat and remove the people whom he dislikes."

Annuar said failure was not an option for Dr Mahathir and it was up to Umno members to evaluate the former premier's latest stunt.

Sabah Umno liaison committee deputy chairman Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak said Dr Mahathir's resignation was for the best of the party.

"This is probably for the best be-

cause when one's relationship with the party or the party leader is no longer tenable, then it is pointless for one to remain in the party.

"Furthermore, Dr Mahathir's actions are hurting the party and for him to remain in the party while at the same time going against the party does not seem logical."

Salleh posted in his blog that Dr Mahathir could continue his attacks against Umno once he was no longer in the party, adding that this would be the second time the latter left the party.

"I am saddened by this episode, not so much because he has, yet again, left Umno; but because of the circumstances behind his resignation."

Salleh said while no one could deny that the former prime minister had done a lot for the country in his 22 years in office, his term was not free of blemishes.

"But, the events over the last year

and his resignation today will be remembered more than the good he has done."

Salleh, however, said he wanted to remind people to take the good and bad parts in the party's history with equal measure.

"I realise this matter is not going to end here and that we shall continue to hear from Dr Mahathir.

"However, I just hope we can maintain some dignity and decorum and not drag the country down to gutter politics.

"And, with all sincerity, I would like to wish Dr Mahathir the very best for the future," he said.

Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Dr Mohd Puad Zarkashi said Dr Mahathir's decision to leave Umno did not come as a surprise but instead, was irrelevant as he had long lost his ability to be rational.

"He has betrayed Umno in his continuous attacks against the party

president's leadership and akin to sabotaging Umno's chances in the next general election."

Puad said it was best for Dr Mahathir's to continue his fight against Najib outside the party.

"As an Umno member, he has tried but failed to bring down Najib for more than a year."

Puad said Umno would overcome Dr Mahathir's decision to leave the party as history had shown that when Dr Mahathir was Umno president, two former Umno presidents, Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Hussein Onn, also left the party in protest.

Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid said it was too early to say whether Dr Mahathir's decision to leave Umno would have an impact on the party.

"A review of the impact can only be made later as the announcement has just been made," he said, adding that since it was the second time Dr Mahathir was quitting the party, his resignation was nothing unusual to Umno members.



Tan Sri Annuar Musa



Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak



Datuk Dr Mohd Puad Zarkashi



Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid