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Leaders disappointed over Dr M's anti-BN stance

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UNITED FRONT:
Ex-PM urged opposition to unite to beat BN in Sungai Besar, Kuala Kangsar by-elections

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BARISAN Nasional leaders are disappointed with former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call for the opposition to unite against BN in the Sungai Besar and Kuala Kangsar by-elections.

Dr Mahathir had said at an event in Shah Alam on Saturday that multi-cornered fights, like the ones that took place in the Sarawak election, would split opposition votes.

He even called on people to vote for Pas, and that it did not matter if the Islamist party was not part of opposition coalition Pakatan Harapan, so long as it was a straight fight against BN.

Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Dr Mohd Puad Zarkashi said Dr Mahathir had confirmed himself as an opposition member.

"It comes as no surprise that Dr Mahathir would advise the opposition to join together to defeat BN in the by-elections."

Puad said Dr Mahathir was frustrated with BN's landslide victory in Sarawak and had his own agenda.

"Dr Mahathir is disappointed that his many attempts to force Datuk Seri Najib Razak to resign as prime minister have failed.



The constituency office of late Sungai Besar MP Datuk Noriah Kasnon in Bandar Sekinchan, Selangor. Pic by Rosdan Wahid

"Although he is behaving like an opposition leader, Dr Mahathir is, in fact, dividing the opposition.

"(PKR president) Datuk Seri Dr

Wan Azizah Wan Ismail will not forgive him. That is why she refuses to attend any event where Dr Mahathir is present."

Puad said Dr Mahathir wanted his son, former Kedah menteri besar Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir, to become prime minister, while Dr Wan Azizah wanted to free her husband, jailed former opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said he was not surprised by Dr Mahathir's stance, since the latter was no longer an Umno member.

"Perhaps this is his last card. However, BN is ready to face anyone and any eventuality in these by-elections."

MCA religious harmony bureau chairman Datuk Seri Ti Lian Ker said Dr Mahathir had lost his dignity as a statesman.

Ti said it was unheard of for a former prime minister to make destructive statements against his party.

"Dr Mahathir has burned bridges with his venomous agenda against Najib. You have to wonder what he is thinking.

"However, the public is unlikely to buy it now that Dr Mahathir has gone back on his words when he was prime minister. He had said that the opposition would never be able to work together."

Based on Malaysians' lukewarm response to Dr Mahathir's declaration campaign against Najib, Ti said people had made it clear that they had little time for the former prime minister.

The by-elections were called after the death of deputy plantation industries and commodities minister and Sungai Besar member of parliament Datuk Noriah Kasnon and Kuala Kangsar MP Datuk Wan Mohammad Khairil Anuar Wan Ahmad in a helicopter crash in Sarawak on May 5.

The Election Commission announced that nomination day for the by-elections would be on June 5 and polling would be on June 18.