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CRACKS WIDENING IN DAP

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4 reps quit party over loss of confidence in Guan Eng

GEORGE TOWN

CRACKS are widening in DAP following the resignation of four of its elected representatives in Malacca, with analysts saying the party's alliance with Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is likely one of the main reasons for the decision.

Political analyst Associate Professor Dr Muhammad Fuad Othman said DAP's grassroots would have had a hard time understanding their leaders' interest in forming a political cooperation with the former premier.

"DAP had gone through many trials and tribulations during Dr Mahathir's leadership. The sudden alliance with the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) chairman would have raised eyebrows among party members.

"This is partly due to the party leadership's failure to explain its decision (to work with Dr Mahathir) to the grassroots. Hence, we can see some repercussion, such as this one where DAP members opt to leave the

party," he told the *New Straits Times* yesterday.

Fuad said some DAP members might regard PPBM as a Malay-Muslim party and just another version of Umno.

Such a view, he said, could lead to dissatisfaction among the grassroots, since many believed that Dr Mahathir had not shifted from his old political mentality.

"So, those who do not share the aspirations of the party leaders will eventually quit. DAP foot soldiers are disillusioned with what their leaders are doing, especially with the party sharing a political platform with PPBM."

Earlier yesterday, Kota Melaka member of parliament Sim Tong Him, Bachang assemblyman Lim Jak Wong, Kesidang assemblyman Chin Choon Seong and Duyong assemblyman Goh Leong San announced their resignation from DAP with immediate effect.

They cited loss of confidence and disappointment with DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng and the national leadership in handling both internal and external party issues, particularly its "loss of direction from its original struggles".

The four also said they could not accept the "so-called new political alignment" DAP had taken lately.

Sim and Goh were suspended by DAP for 12 months since February last year for allegedly smearing the



(From left) Bachang assemblyman Lim Jak Wong, Kota Melaka member of parliament Sim Tong Him, Duyong assemblyman Goh Leong San and Kesidang assemblyman Chin Choon Seong showing their resignation letters in Malacca yesterday. PIC BY MUHAMMAD ZUHAI RI ZUBER

party's name.

In December last year, DAP deputy secretary-general P. Ramasamy had said members who disagreed with the party's decision to work with Dr Mahathir were free to leave.

Political analyst Professor Dr Sivamurugan Pandian said trouble was brewing in DAP through "several protest votes" against the party during the 13th General Election, but described the resignations in Malacca as "unexpected".

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"DAP and Dr Mahathir used to be enemies. This (the resignations) may be a warning to the party's top leadership to evaluate its decision (to work with Dr Mahathir), if the leaders want to avoid losing support in the party.

"These leaders (who resigned) have supporters who can persuade others to cast protest votes if no immediate decision is taken to consol-

idate the party and return to its original struggles."

Sivamurugan also suggested that they might have resigned following suspicions that they would be dropped as candidates in the next general election.

Guan Eng had yet to respond to text messages seeking his comments as at press time.

He is expected to issue a statement today.