

# SOME UMNO LEADERS 'HAVE LOST THEIR WAY'

NST  
-23/11/2019  
B-4

Azmin says they expressed support for my leadership and want to jump ship, says PM

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SEVERAL Barisan Nasional members of parliament had asked on the possibility of jumping ship and expressed support for Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, during their controversial meeting with Datuk Seri Azmin Ali on Monday night.

This was revealed by Dr Mahathir yesterday as relayed to him by Azmin, who is the economic affairs minister and PKR deputy president. The latter had hosted the meeting at his official residence in Putrajaya.

"You have to ask Azmin what was discussed (during the meeting). He said some Umno leaders have lost their way; (they) didn't know what to do, so they asked

whether they could join another party.

"Some expressed their support for my leadership," Dr Mahathir said after attending the Alumni Malaysia Future Leaders School (MFLS) convention at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia here yesterday.

On the meeting, Dr Mahathir, who is Pakatan Harapan chairman, said matters pertaining to the meeting should be addressed by PKR.

"I leave the matter to the party (PKR). If the party doesn't agree with that (approach), it should tell him so. He (Azmin) is not from my party."

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir said the PKR infighting should be resolved within the party.

Opting to distance himself from the conflict, he said: "I stay away from the infighting. It should be resolved within the party."

On Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Annuar Musa's call for him to choose either Umno or DAP to win support of the Malays, Dr Mahathir said he would have chosen Umno if it was not "ruined".

"If they did not ruin Umno, I would have chosen Umno. But,

because he (Annuar) and friends had used Umno to gain money, how can I join such a party?"

Earlier, he said Pas leaders had expressed their support for his leadership.

"All I know is that Pas said it wanted to support me. Umno also said it wanted to support me. Thank you.

"I don't know who else who do not support me. If they don't support me, they can always pass a motion for a vote of no-confidence against the prime minister and I will abide by the rule," he said.

Former Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein had last month written in the *New Straits Times* on the importance of unification, which must first be championed by political leaders.

Dr Mahathir had made the call for others to join Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia to unite the Malays.

He had said the community was becoming fragmented as there were too many Malay-based parties, which would make electoral success more elusive.

He also said PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had told him during their meeting on Thursday that some cabinet min-

isters were believed to have been awarding projects.

"But cabinet ministers have the right to award projects, (but) in their constituencies."

Dr Mahathir, who had earlier attended the cabinet meeting in Putrajaya, said the matter of possible cabinet reshuffle was not raised.

The matter is expected to be discussed at PH's presidential council meeting today.

Earlier in his speech at the event, Dr Mahathir advised students to choose the right leaders who could take the country to the path of prosperity and civilisation.

He said leaders were a crucial factor in determining the fate of a nation, whether they would bring it to greater heights or bring upon disaster to society.

"When we have charismatic leaders with good values, society would prosper. Bad leaders who abuse their powers will bring disaster to the country. We have such an example in our country."

Dr Mahathir said youths who would one day become leaders must emulate the traits of good leaders, including those mentioned in history books and biographies.