

PM fuels talk of new ruling coalition

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But politicians divided on how such a move should be carried out

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PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that he welcomes support from anyone has added fuel to speculation of a new ruling coalition being formed.

But questions have arisen on whether such a move would be simple to pull off as parties are bound by their own internal rules.

There have also been differing views among the leaders as to how the approach should be done.

Senior politicians said it was fairly easy to do so with a nod from the central leadership, discounting arguments that an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) would be needed to support the proposal.

Umno secretary-general Tan Sri

Annuar Musa said there was no need to convene an EGM to get feedback from party members.

Umno is expected to hold its supreme council meeting today.

The party's deputy president Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan said it was best if there was a consensus within the Umno supreme council.

However, he warned that pushing for a government without a majority mandate by the people would not bode well for it in the next general election.

Mohamad said it was unlikely that Umno would form political cooperation for a new government without going through a general election as this would be going against democratic principles.

"If we ever take up the offer, or if Dr Mahathir ever offers it, it will not be democratic.

"There is no such thing as a 'back-door government' in the first place.

A government can only be formed using the front door," he added.

Umno supreme council member Tan Sri Noh Omar said the party's supreme council was empowered to make decisions for the party on any urgent matter, including cooperation with other parties without an EGM being held.

"In the party constitution, when there is no EGM, the supreme council is given the mandate to make decisions on the party's behalf," he said.

Noh was asked to comment on reports that Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi had allegedly said the party must work with Dr Mahathir because PAS was doing so.

PAS sources also said the party's leaders could best decide for the party and that they need not consult their members.

However, its president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang insisted that PAS

would only form a government through legal means.

"We work based on collaboration, which can be made with anyone and everyone. Anyone who wants to collaborate with us is welcome.

"In a democracy, we can enter Parliament using many doors, but PAS will only be the government by using the front door," he said during a function in Kelantan on Wednesday.

PAS secretary-general Datuk Takiyuddin Hassan concurred that PAS would only strive to be the government using legal means.

"We can enter Parliament to become the government as long as it is legal. As to whether it is about morals or not, that is up to how one interprets 'morality'.

"It would be immoral as the Opposition to remain silent and not do anything when the government does not perform to the people's

expectations," he said.

"If the Prime Minister cannot govern the country because he does not have the support of his coalition parties, we will support him fully.

"But bear in mind that Dr Mahathir meets everyone, be they presidents of Umno, Gerakan or PAS, so that does not really mean anything," said Takiyuddin.

However, Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia deputy president Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir dismissed such claims of a new coalition.

"This has never been discussed in Bersatu. As far as I know, all this talk about it is only percolating among Umno and PAS leaders," he said when contacted.



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