

DISMISSES CLAIMS

DR M: I AM NOT PN'S DE FACTO LEADER

Ex-PM says recent meeting with Pas leader concerns Malay unity, nothing to do with politics

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FORMER prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has dismissed claims that he is the de facto leader of Perikatan Nasional (PN).

Dr Mahathir insisted that his recent meeting with Pas president Tan Sri Abdul Hadi Awang

and the party leaders was over Malay unity and had nothing to do with politics.

"There is none of that (being PN's de facto leader), all we asked for is that they (Pas leaders) sign the proclamation as a statement of their acknowledgement of the Malay struggle.

"The proclamation has nothing to do with political parties. We only intend to mobilise the Malays because they don't know what is happening to them right now," he said after attending a Hari Raya Aidilfitri open house in Kampung Naga here on Thursday.

Present were his son, Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir, who is also Parti Pejuang Tanahair president, and its secretary-general Datuk Amiruddin Hamzah.



Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (seated, right) speaking at a press conference after attending a Hari Raya Aidilfitri open house in Kampung Naga, Kubang Pasu, on Thursday. With him are Parti Pejuang Tanahair president Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir (second from right) and secretary-general Datuk Amiruddin Hamzah (third from right). PIC BY SYAHARIM ABIDIN

On Wednesday, PKR communications director Lee Chean Chung congratulated Dr Mahathir for his new "leadership" role in the PN coalition.

Lee claimed that Pas and Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu) were clinging to Dr Mahathir to remain relevant as their influence was eroding.

On Monday, Hadi said his decision to work with Dr Mahathir, his former political rival, was on the grounds of Malay-Muslim unity. He said Pas was supportive of Dr Mahathir's efforts to bring together Malay leaders, scholars, political parties and non-governmental organisations.

Last week, Dr Mahathir's political aide, Abu Bakar Yahya, posted photos of Pas leaders, including Hadi, signing the Malay Proclamation.

On a separate matter, Dr Ma-

hathir said Gerakan Tanah Air (GTA) had ceased to function as a political pact due to its failure in the 15th General Election (GE15) last November. He also said he was no longer GTA chairman.

"There's nothing there any more, nothing any more... GTA didn't work, it could not help our cause. It was formed as a political pact.

"However, of the 125 seats that it contested in GE15, it failed to win any. If we want to fight for the Malays, we must have Malay support. It's not functioning."

"(My previous) position of the GTA chairman is also in the past. I am no longer (that). GTA did not meet its objectives."

In GE15, all 125 GTA candidates, including Dr Mahathir and Mukhriz, failed to get enough votes to keep their election deposits.