

# 'Dr M's role not political'

## Bersatu: Former PM brought in for his experience, that's all

By RAGANANTHINI  
VETHASALAM  
raga@thestar.com.my

**PETALING JAYA:** While Bersatu has brushed off notions that Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's appointment as the "unofficial" advisor of the State Government 4 (SG4) is apolitical in nature, an Amanah leader believes that this is still a politically motivated move.

Bersatu information chief Datuk Razali Idris said Dr Mahathir himself is an "institution", and he brings along a vast experience in administration and developing the country, as Malaysia was once branded as the Asian Tiger during his tenure.

Perikatan Nasional, he said, wants to leverage the former prime minister's experience to develop the four states under its rule.

"Tun has given talks in Terengganu and I see that he is doing all he can to ensure that these four states, which are seen

as backwards, can be developed to be on par with the developed states on the west coast (of the peninsula)," he said.

Having participated in the discussion, Razali said politics did not crop up in these conversations.

In fact, Razali said, the veteran statesman is focused on economic development as well as policies such as the Look East Policy, privatisation, reducing bureaucracy, and weeding out corruption.

"That is what he has been emphasising. Hence, the issue of voting for Perikatan and rejecting Pakatan Harapan never arose. There was no talk about that," he said, adding as the state elections are over, the question did not arise.

He said the coalition wanted to seek the 98-year-old leader's guidance while he was still able to do so.

Asked whether this can be taken as Dr Mahathir's homecoming to Bersatu, which he founded,

Razali also said that does not arise as the focus is solely on economic development.

"The development of these four states is not related to Bersatu and Perikatan politics. Tun can be anyone's advisor, as he is no longer with a party. He is standing on his own two feet. That is why we agreed to have him as an advisor for the four states," he said.

Meanwhile, Amanah communications director Khalid Samad felt that the move was all about politics.

"I fear they (Perikatan) are merely scraping the bottom of the barrel for ideas on development by bringing in Tun. I believe, again, it is politically motivated to show 'the Malay States uniting' under the leadership of the man who was once ridiculed and chastised by them," he said.

"It shows that once you are with them, everything about you is okay, but when you are against them, everything about you is evil," he added.

Khalid said while Dr Mahathir can come up with ideas and suggestions for development, in many cases, Federal Government approval is needed to move things forward.

He said these opposition states actually do not want to develop their states with the help of the Federal Government because they simply want to be at loggerheads with Putrajaya and subsequently play victim.

"This shows that they are constantly playing politics, and to them, that is more important than serving the people who brought them into power," he said.

Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar said on Thursday that the mentris besar of Kelantan, Kedah, Perlis and himself will be discussing an action plan for the group that's been called SG4, and that Dr Mahathir will be advising the group on governance to ensure the proposed grouping will be managed efficiently.