

**Dr M says campaigning to thank BN for past support**  
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**By Mohd Farhan Darwis**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 6 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad explained today he has been campaigning hard for Barisan Nasional (BN) in recent months to show his gratitude to the pact for supporting him throughout his tenure as prime minister.

The influential Umno leader denied that BN has been using his face to front its campaign for Election 2013, saying instead that it was he who was using the pact as his platform to express his thanks.

“It is not BN using me, I am using BN to say thank you,” he told a press conference after a Perkasa gathering at SMK Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah in Shah Alam this afternoon.

He reminded that it was due to BN’s unbending support that he helmed the country as prime minister for 22 years until his retirement in 2003.

“Should I not say thank you while I am still healthy... this is my opportunity,” he said.

Explaining, Dr Mahathir pointed out that during the election period, he would be able to traverse the length and breadth of the country to meet as many people as possible.

“They all supported me,” he said.

It has been 10 years since Dr Mahathir left office but over the past few months, the 87-year-old has emerged as BN’s most active campaigner, ahead of the impending 13th general election.

As Election 2013 moves into overdrive, the outspoken former prime minister has been the most visible face of the ruling coalition — apart from Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin — criss-crossing the country expounding on BN’s power-sharing formula to drum up support for Team Najib.

“Malaysians who love this country should uphold the only concept that can work in this multiracial country — the kongsi concept,” the 87-year-old politician said in his column yesterday in the New Straits Times daily.

“Only BN can provide this kongsi. The opposition simply cannot kongsi. A mandate for the opposition will be disastrous for Malaysia,” he added, using the Malay word meaning “sharing” in the English-language newspaper to refer to the 13-party coalition’s formula that has kept it in power at the federal level since the country’s Independence in 1957.

Despite his age, Dr Mahathir has been keeping a tight schedule touring every corner of the country, including across the South China Sea in remote villages in the two Borneo states of Sarawak and Sabah — the latter where a guerrilla war has been raging since February when Filipino Muslim gunmen claiming an archaic royal link invaded.

The fourth prime minister appears to be Najib’s campaigner-in-chief as he fronts the BN’s ceramah circuit to spread its power-sharing formula for stability as the world continues to be rocked by political and economic crises that have increased the number of jobless and created social unrest in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Senior members of the Mahathir Cabinet also appear to be ditching their low-public profile after retirement from the government to pitch similar messages and swing voter support for Najib.

Former Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin emerged from his political cocoon recently and advised Najib to axe the deadwood from within the current Cabinet.

The 74-year-old government pensioner's remarks appeared to be sharp criticism of the present administration, but Daim was also reported to have said that Najib was doing a "fairly good job" as the country's sixth prime minister and was confident the BN would win the elections.

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