

Mahathir told to consider Muhyiddin-Razaleigh team
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Shahbudin Husin says it will increase support for the campaign to oust Najib.

PETALING JAYA: Dr Mahathir Mohamad has been urged to promote a Muhyiddin-Razaleigh combination as replacement for the leadership of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

This will increase support for his campaign to remove Najib, Shahbudin Husin says in his latest blog entry.

Political observers generally believe that the former prime minister has identified Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin as his choice and that he would not consider Umno veteran Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, who in 1987 nearly unseated him from the Umno presidency.

However, Shahbudin quotes unnamed Umno sources as saying that Mahathir has indicated his willingness to consider Razaleigh if Muhyiddin declines the candidacy. Shahbudin used to be an official of Federal Territory Umno and claims that he maintains contact with the party's warlords.

He says Mahathir has given signals to Muhyiddin to quickly state where he stands in the dispute between him and Najib and that he may choose another candidate if the Deputy Prime Minister dallies for too long.

Shahbudin writes: "Speaking in Penang last night, the former prime minister says there are other leaders (or another leader) besides Muhyiddin who can take over from Najib." In Malay, the word "pemimpin", like other common nouns, is used both in the singular and plural senses.

"According to the interpretation of several groups within Umno, 'pemimpin lain' refers to none other than Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah," Shahbudin says.

However, he adds, it appears that Mahathir still prefers Muhyiddin because he is next in line in Umno's hierarchy, whereas Razaleigh is a mere divisional chief.

Shahbudin urges Muhyiddin to state his stand as soon as the Permatang Pauh by-election is over.

"However," he says, "seeing that the issue involves ensuring Barisan Nasional's continued hold on power, Mahathir should also consider the combined leadership of Muhyiddin and Razaleigh."

In a probable reference to Razaleigh's popularity outside Umno, he says such a combination would be in the best interest of the nation.

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