

**Mahathir's failures and Umno's faulty tradition**  
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**Ariff Sabri says Dr M must abstain from choosing a leader for Malaysians.**

KUALA LUMPUR: Raub MP Ariff Sabri has cautioned Malaysians against allowing Dr Mahathir Mohamad to choose their next prime minister, citing the "repeated mistakes" he has made in performing that function.

"Dr Mahathir can point out the bad qualities of a successor, but he is hopeless when it comes to identifying the successor," Ariff says. He cites this as the "main reason" why the former PM "must abstain" from choosing a leader for Malaysians although they "allow him to point out the deficiencies of any current leader."

In a blog posting that urges Umno to abandon its so-called succession-by-hierarchy system, Ariff says its highly probable Muhyiddin Yassin will "fall short of the mark" if he happens to be the one Mahathir chooses as successor to Najib Abdul Razak.

According to Ariff, Mahathir's failures in choosing a successor are a result of the absence of a succession plan in Umno.

He says, "Mahathir's so-called endorsement of Muhyiddin is in the form of some vague reference to the equally non-committal idea of 'according to the Umno hierarchy system.'"

This "reliance on the Umno tradition," he adds, "must change precisely because it has failed all the time.

"To Umno, that means choosing a leader who isn't from the conventional line up. If there is a person more qualified than the Number Two, that person ought to be accepted."

In a couple of recent articles, Ariff has rooted for Umno veteran Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, saying he would be an acceptable successor to Najib even to the Opposition. In today's article, without mentioning Razaleigh by name, he says: "Isn't it a curious thing that for the first time in our history, the Opposition is endorsing someone from Umno to become the PM?"

He says this shows that the Opposition "conducts itself responsibly and commits itself to what's good for Malaysia."

"The Opposition is keener to have a national leader committed to the idea of inclusive politics rather than a person enmeshed in partisan politics," he adds. "We want a leader who's good for the business of this country.

"The business of this country is to be a country founded on democratic means, upholding the rule of law. The country must remain structured by the institutions that support the existence of a democratic Malaysia as such.

"The leader we need is a person unflinchingly committed to these principles."

Ariff hazards a guess as to why Muhyiddin has not openly declared where he stands in the Mahathir-Najib quarrel despite hints that the former prime minister was endorsing him.

“Muhyiddin knows Mahathir’s endorsement is no manna from heaven,” he says. “That is the reason why he is playing hide and seek. There has been no open endorsement on Muhyiddin’s replacing Najib and so Muhyiddin hasn’t rushed out openly.

“But Muhyiddin has committed the sin of showing that he is aligned to Mahathir’s thinking. Fatal mistake. Najib’s people do not trust Muhyiddin despite all those farcical kiss-and-make-ups in public shows.

“Muhyiddin knows this and his people, though eager to see the boss take over, are restrained.”

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