

Muhyiddin best choice to take over and save BN, says veteran journalist
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A veteran journalist has argued today that Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin is the best person to take over from Datuk Seri Najib Razak as prime minister and Umno president, as pressure piled on the latter to resign.

Datuk Abdul Kadir Jasin said that Muhyiddin stands a good chance of consolidating Umno and bringing back support of the Malays, which is crucial to Barisan Nasional (BN) in winning the next general election.

In fact, Kadir argued that Najib is the opposition's "biggest asset" to clinch the next election due to public ill will he is creating from his numerous scandals.

"The PR (Pakatan Rakyat) will lose its silver bullet if Najib resigns. He is its biggest asset. Things will be worse for the opposition if Muhyiddin succeeds in improving the affairs of the state."

He said Muhyiddin has not been embroiled in any major scandals, his wife and children are rarely in the limelight, except for singer-songwriter Najwa Mahiaddin.

This is different from Najib, whose family's wealth has been the subject of much speculation by the media, and even caught the attention of international newspapers.

"But (Muhyiddin) may not be so dearly loved by non-Malays because he openly acknowledged that he is a Malay first and Malaysian second in relation to Najib's 1Malaysia branding.

"So he may not get full backing from non-Malay parties in BN, but he can count on the support of the 'anak negeri' (indigenous) parties in Sarawak," Kadir wrote in the latest posting of his blog, The Scribe today.

Kadir's latest post comes as Najib is under increasing pressure from some Umno veterans such as Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and former finance minister, Tun Daim Zainuddin, to resign.

Najib's detractors have claimed the prime minister was weighing down BN with his mismanagement of the economy.

Kadir, however, admits it is difficult to force Najib out of office compared to his predecessor Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who was pressured to step down in 2009.

"Najib isn't Abdullah. (Abdullah) did not have as many apple polishers as the incumbent. Pak Lah did not have an ambitious wife. He had health issues.

"He did not have a support base as strong as Najib. Umno divisional, state and federal

leaders were then less hypocritical and there was still some struggle left," Kadir wrote.

Compared to Abdullah, Najib sits on top of a huge Prime Minister's Office, which he uses to dispense favours, Kadir said.

"Abdullah also did not have too many people depending on him for favours – political, business and professional.

"Members of his kitchen cabinet numbered less than 10. Najib has hundreds. He built his influence by dispensing favours to as many people as possible.

"He runs the biggest Prime Minister's Office in history and controls party chiefs with the gifts of golden eggs," Kadir wrote.

At the same time, Kadir said, Najib is "loved" by top Malay, Chinese and Indian tycoons.

"The Bumiputera businessmen get contracts and blessings from him.

"The Chinese also get contracts from the government while at the same time they take advantage of marketplace uncertainties to buy back their shares, double their profits and transfer their wealth abroad.

"The Indian tycoons too benefited by being close to him and his household."

But at the same time, Kadir does not believe it is smooth sailing for PR, as the coalition struggles to sort out their ideological differences and put forward a unified common platform.

"(The PR) cannot hope to win power by merely taking advantage of the BN's weaknesses. They must develop their own strength."

For now, Kadir believes that a more likely scenario is that Najib survives as prime minister, Umno president and BN chairman but the ruling coalition could lose the next general election.

"We Malaysians could very well be approaching the hell gate of weak government. Both BN and PR have their own sets of issues to be able to offer a credible choice at the polls." – April 6, 2015.

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