

'Hard reset' for Pakatan in the works, says Guan Eng

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DAP leader says inclusion of PPBM led by former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad into Pakatan Harapan is like the US and Russia starting afresh in their relations.

GEORGE TOWN: DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng has assured opposition supporters that Pakatan Harapan (PH) will emerge "new and improved" following the inclusion of Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) within its ranks last week.

He compared the relationship of PPBM and its chairman Dr Mahathir Mohamad with the original members of the coalition – PKR, DAP and Amanah – to that of the US and Russia.

"It is like the United States and Russia trying to start afresh in their relations," the Penang chief minister said at a press conference in Komtar today.

Stressing that PH should brace itself for a "hard reset", Lim said the coalition would proceed in a manner befitting the adage "to keep the good, discard the bad".

When asked if Mahathir and Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, the PKR president and current opposition leader would be made "special advisers" of the new coalition's pro-tem committee, Lim said it had not been decided yet.

"They are two main personalities. It is too early to say as the pro-tem committee has not elected any office bearers," he said.

"We have Dr Mahathir who is a former prime minister and then we have Kak Wan (Wan Azizah) who is now opposition leader... These two uniting figures can help us towards a political reset of our country," he added.

The leaders of PKR, DAP and Amanah have been at loggerheads with Mahathir since 1998 when he sacked Anwar Ibrahim as his deputy and expelled him from Umno.

The move led to Anwar's supporters and his wife Wan Azizah forming Keadilan, the precursor to PKR. It also ushered cooperation between PKR and DAP against Mahathir and the Barisan Nasional.

Mahathir however left Umno and BN in Feb 2016, and later form PPBM with the purpose of unseating current Prime Minister and Umno President Najib Razak.

Lim said PH would now be a coalition of the hopeful, uniting all members of its various parties.

“We are looking for a political reset of our country’s political future. We want to embrace those who want to do good, those who want a democratic government, justice, equality and prosperity,” he said.

He stressed that the name of the coalition was likely to remain, although this would have to be decided by the secretariat.

A new 18-member panel comprising those from PH component parties was formed last Monday.

They will also register as a formal coalition soon and sport their own logo and manifesto.

PPBM president Muhyiddin Yassin was quoted as telling a party rally in Padang Rengas on March 25 that the coalition should change its name to Barisan Rakyat if the other PH leaders were in agreement.

He reportedly said the most important thing was to ensure that the “new coalition” was Malay-based and that PPBM be made as among the main parties to support its struggle.

“We would like this movement pioneered by the opposition to be an organisation headed by Malays,” he was quoted by Astro Awani in its report.

“Its majority is Malay, but the other parties united in Pakatan Harapan will become a part of our family. This is important for the people to be convinced (in PH),” he added.

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