

**Dr M: I'll help get Anwar out, if that's what people want**

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**By Sean Augustin**

**Former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad says he is not someone who holds a grudge, and has helped others who turned on him before.**

SHAH ALAM: Dr Mahathir Mohamad last night seemingly suggested he had no qualms about leading the charge to obtain a royal pardon for his former arch nemesis, Anwar Ibrahim if the opposition wins the next general election.

"If people want Anwar, who am I to stop the rakyat," the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) chairman said at a dialogue held here last night.

The former prime minister said this in response to a question by Wong Chin Huat, a political analyst and academic, who wanted to know if Mahathir would help secure Anwar's release and get the latter back into the political arena.

This was especially since there was a sentiment that Mahathir's former protege could play a vital role in a post-Najib Razak era as Anwar was capable of uniting the people and championing reforms.

Anwar is currently serving a five-year term for sodomising his former aide.

The former deputy prime minister, who was Mahathir's heir apparent throughout most of the 1990s, was unceremoniously removed from the government and as UMNO deputy president in 1998 for alleged abuse of power.

Many of Anwar's supporters blame Mahathir for being behind the incarceration of Anwar after their fallout.

But last year, Mahathir – who has since become the prime minister's fiercest critic – turned up at the Kuala Lumpur High Court in September to attend the hearing of an application filed by Anwar to challenge the National Security Council (NSC) Act 2016.

It was the first time that the two men met face-to-face in 18 years.

Then in February this year, the duo met for 40 minutes at the High Court in Kuala Lumpur where they discussed political problems facing the nation.

Mahathir, who had earlier said that there were no permanent friends and enemies in politics, said he was not the type to hold a grudge against his enemies.

“Many in this hall have been imprisoned and I have freed them. I am not the type who holds a grudge.

“In fact, I also welcomed back those who supported Tengku Razaleigh (Hamzah) and one of them even became prime minister,” he said, referring to his immediate successor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Abdullah had aligned himself with Tengku Razaleigh’s Team B in the 1987 Umno election, and was dropped as the defence minister in a cabinet reshuffle in its aftermath.

On another matter, Mahathir said while the component parties that make up Pakatan Harapan seem to have different agendas, they were united in their belief that Najib had to be removed.

“While coming together has had its hiccups, it’s still a huge success by all accounts. I’m sitting next to (DAP’s Lim) Kit Siang and (Amanah’s) Mohamed Sabu.

“Who would have thought of this? But it has happened,” he said, adding that progress has been made.

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