

Muhyiddin: Khairy's call for Mahathir to retire shows no bravery at all
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The PPBM president says it only indicates the anxiety among Umno leaders over the rising support given by Malays to PPBM.

PETALING JAYA: PPBM president Muhyiddin Yassin has brushed aside Khairy Jamaluddin's call for Dr Mahathir Mohamad to retire, saying it is a symptom of the nervousness being felt by Umno leaders over the "phenomenal" rise in popularity of PPBM.

The former Umno deputy president said he was disappointed with Khairy, the youth and sports minister, as he had high hopes for him in the party.

"As the head of Umno's youth wing, which should be full of youthful idealism, he should rightly urge (prime minister) Najib (Razak) to withdraw," Muhyiddin, who is the former deputy prime minister, said.

"Urging an opposition party leader who does not have any powers to retire is not a form of bravery," he said, referring to Mahathir's current role as PPBM chairman.

"On the other hand, calling on Najib, who has all the power in his hands to give way and retire, would be the hallmark of true youthful courage," he added in a statement today.

On Sunday, Khairy was reported to have said that Mahathir and PKR de facto head Anwar Ibrahim were seen attempting to divide the Malays to achieve their own vested interests, while DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang was trying to create a rift between the Malays and Chinese.

He said the three leaders should retire and allow the young people in their parties to take over.

Mahathir, 92, was Umno president and prime minister from 1981 to 2003. He left the party along with Muhyiddin to form PPBM in 2015.

Muhyiddin, who was deputy prime minister from 2009 to 2015, also took current Umno deputy president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to task for threatening on July 8 to expose Mahathir's "sores" and weaknesses if he continued to make critical attacks on the party and the government.

Muhyiddin said Umno leaders who have recently escalated their attacks against Mahathir and PPBM are aware of the real problem that has hit Umno.

“When I was in Umno before, there were those among them who came to meet me to tell me about the problems being faced by Umno and asked me to do something.

“They told me that if I, as the Umno deputy president at that time, did not do something to rectify the situation, the country will collapse.”

Muhyiddin added the wave of rejection towards Umno among Malays had already started.

“This is because for many Malays, Umno, which had earlier struggled to protect the fate of the Malays, has now changed and become a party that protects the interests of an individual, the president of Umno.”

Muhyiddin added that since it was now the season for Umno’s divisional meetings, leaders were using these events to assail political rivals.

He noted that Umno supreme council member and Muar division head Razali Ibrahim had announced that he was ready to defend the Muar parliamentary seat against Muhyiddin in the 14th general election.

“I feel that Umno leaders are nervous. They know that the people and the Malays themselves, including Umno members at the grassroots, are rejecting the party,” he said.

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