

Mahathir: Free Anwar and let him run in elections
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Former prime minister tells UK paper that Anwar Ibrahim is the 'victim of a political vendetta'.

PETALING JAYA: Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who sacked Anwar Ibrahim as his deputy nearly two decades ago, now says the former opposition leader should be released from jail and allowed to contest parliamentary elections.

Mahathir told The Guardian that Anwar was the “victim of a political vendetta” and “unfairly treated”.

“The decision of the court was obviously influenced by the government and I think the incoming government would be able to persuade the king to give a full pardon for Anwar.

“In which case he would be able to participate in politics and become prime minister. I can have no objection to that,” Mahathir was quoted as saying.

Anwar is currently serving a five-year jail term at Sungai Buloh prison for committing sodomy.

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.

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

He is now chairman of PPBM, one of four component parties in opposition coalition Pakatan Harapan. The other three parties are DAP, PKR and Amanah.

In April, he indicated that he had no qualms about leading the charge to obtain a royal pardon for Anwar if the opposition wins GE14.

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