

Ramasamy: I've had problems with Mahathir, but he's useful

Free Malaysia Today

March 31, 2017

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Ex-PM can help the opposition win Malay votes where PKR and Amanah might not be able to, says DAP man.

KUALA LUMPUR: DAP leader P Ramasamy has sought to convince Pakatan Harapan (PH) supporters that Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) can win rural votes where PKR and Amanah might not hold enough sway.

He said PPBM chairman Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is former prime minister, would be especially helpful in efforts to gain the Malay vote, particularly in Felda settlements.

"I still believe Mahathir contributed to the mess we're in now, but under the current circumstances, how else can you unseat Najib Razak and Umno?"

"I think DAP made the right choice in working with Mahathir.

"Yes, his policies were unpalatable and he had people like Lim Guan Eng, Lim Kit Siang and Anwar Ibrahim arrested, but in places like Felda, for example, PKR and Amanah may be weak."

Ramasamy, one of Penang's two deputy chief ministers, was speaking at a forum organised by the Foreign Correspondents Club of Malaysia yesterday.

He told his audience that no single opposition party could win an election in Malaysia. "You need to form a coalition," he said.

"In Penang, even if you win all the seats, you will not have a simple majority. You need PKR.

"I don't know if the optimism that existed in 2013 still prevails, but with PPBM, there are new dynamics at play in terms of rural Malay support."

He claimed DAP was the strongest party in PH, with strong support from Chinese and Indian voters, but added that the party was still struggling to win over rural Malays.

Ramasamy also addressed the question of PH's candidate for prime minister, saying he remained firm that Anwar was the most suitable.

"He is in prison but will be released if we come into power," he said.

“He’s still a respected figure. Without him, there would have been no Pakatan Rakyat or even a Pakatan Harapan.

“Just because he’s in jail does not mean we have forgotten him.

“I don’t think it should be Mahathir because he’s had his term. He’s 90 years old. I don’t think even he wants to be prime minister.”

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Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/03/31/ramasamy-ive-had-problems-with-mahathir-but-hes-useful/>