

Azmin speaks of close ties with Dr M and 'sister' Nurul Izzah
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PKR deputy president Mohamed Azmin Ali has shed light on his close relationship with Pakatan Harapan chairperson Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Seeking to quell long-standing talk of a rift with PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim's family, he also revealed how he had family-like ties with Nurul Izzah Anwar.

In an interview with local Mandarin-language daily *Nanyang Siang Pau*, Azmin said Mahathir had recently requested to meet him in person, despite being in the hospital.

"For now, my relationship with Mahathir is good.

"Last Sunday (Feb 11), he, through his son, sent a text message to me saying he wanted to meet me in person.

"But his doctor advised him against receiving visitors for now, so I will see him another day," Azmin said.

Ninety-three-year-old Mahathir was hospitalised at the National Heart Institute (IJN) last Friday for a chest infection and temporarily remains out of action.

Since coming out of retirement to helm Harapan, Mahathir has been a polarising figure among Anwar supporters and Reformasi activists.

During Mahathir's 22-year tenure as prime minister, Anwar was sacked as deputy prime minister and later jailed for what he claimed was a politically-motivated sodomy charge.

In 1998, Anwar began the Reformasi movement to shift the country's politics away from Mahathirism, out of which PKR was born.

However, Azmin said the former prime minister was needed in the present political climate to appeal to the Malay community, especially to the older generation of Malays.

"We need Mahathir to be part of our group, he will join forces with Anwar," he said.

Harapan leaders are banking on Mahathir and his party Bersatu to instigate a 'Malay tsunami' against Umno-BN to help them win Putrajaya in the coming general election.

'Izzah is like my sister'

Azmin also spoke to the daily of his good relationship with both Anwar's wife Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and daughter Nurul Izzah.

Wan Azizah is PKR president while Nurul Izzah is a vice-president.

"Nurul is like my blood sister, I have known her since she was young.

"When she was young, I even carried her in my arms," he said, adding that he used to vacation with Anwar's family when he served as the former deputy prime minister's private secretary.

The Selangor menteri besar pointed out that while Anwar's family and he had different methods of working and thinking, this did not stop them from working together.

An example of this was how he recently sat down with Nurul Izzah to discuss election strategy.

Azmin had said this in response to speculation that after Anwar's incarceration for Sodomy II, Wan Azizah, Nurul Izzah and PKR vice-president Rafizi Ramli had joined forces to assert a challenge against his position in the party.

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