

## **Mustapa Mohamed joins Bersatu**

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PETALING JAYA, Oct 26 (Bernama) – Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, who left UMNO last month, has decided to join Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu), chaired by Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight.

He submitted his membership form officially to Dr Mahathir in the presence of Bersatu President Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and the top leadership of Bersatu at a media conference after a meeting of the party's top leadership council held here.

Mustapa also received the party's membership card from Dr Mahathir.

Commenting on Mustapa's participation in the party, Dr Mahathir said his participation was made voluntarily and not at the invitation of the party.

"I am very happy because we received the membership from a former UMNO leader. We had given time to him to become an independent Member of Parliament and after we had observed his stand, we agreed that he qualified to be a party member of Bersatu,"he said.

Mustapa, who is also the Member of Parliament for Jeli, declared his decision to leave UMNO on Sept 18 after serving the party for 40 years as he felt that UMNO's approach was no longer in line with the principles of his political struggles.

Asked whether there would be more UMNO members joining Bersatu, Dr Mahathir replied briefly: "We will see,".

Meanwhile, Mustapa who was the former Minister of International Trade and Industry, said his decision to become a Bersatu member was made after making an observation for

several weeks as an Independent Member of Parliament and looking at the current political development.

He said that the platform of Bersatu's struggles appeared to be capable of giving him a bigger role to look after the interests of his constituency in Jeli particularly, and Kelantan in general.

"I wish to record my appreciation to Tun Dr Mahathir and (Tan Sri) Muhyiddin and the Bersatu leadership lineup for accepting me into the party," he said.

He also said he hoped to help the government implement the agenda to empower Bumiputeras and a more inclusive economic plan.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir announced that the Bersatu general assembly had been scheduled for Dec 28 to 30.

This was decided in the two-and-a-half hour meeting which also discussed efforts to improve the party's membership system.

Dr Mahathir also announced the setting-up of eight Bersatu divisions in Negeri Sembilan.

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