

One-day Parliament sitting great for health but not for politics, says Dr Mahathir
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By ZAKIAH KOYA

PETALING JAYA: The one-day parliamentary sitting on May 18 has presented Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu) elected MPs with a dilemma as to its sitting positions.

Bersatu chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the party was currently divided into two factions - one is with the government, the other is against the government.

"So, the faction against the government cannot sit together with the faction with the government.

"So, it should be among the opposition together with Pakatan but not as a member of Pakatan. When you have more than two parties for example, the opposition will be made up of many different parties, it is up to them who will lead them as opposition (leader).

So, this faction of Bersatu will have to accept the leader chosen by the opposition (MPs)," said the former Pakatan Harapan chairman in a video message to The Star.

Dr Mahathir added that the opposition leader in Dewan Rakyat should be decided by the opposition MPs.

"The opposition will have to determine who will be the opposition leader," he said.

Although only issues of the management of the Covid-19 will be allowed to be raised in Dewan Rakyat on May 18, Dr Mahathir claimed that the legitimacy of the Perikatan Nasional (Perikatan) government has yet to be mandated by Parliament.

"What the Dewan Rakyat needs to do is to show whether they support Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's claims that he gets the support of the majority, not today, but at the time when he was sworn in to become the PM, at that time did he have a majority or not?," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the one-day sitting on May 18 is a good decision health-wise but not politically for the opposition.

"It is good only because it will reduce the risk of being infected by the coronavirus. But in terms of the political situation in the country, it is not good. Because if only one day is devoted only to discussing the epidemic, then the achievement will be very minimum.

"At this moment, there are things being done by the government which are not very well received by the people. And if the government continues to do things without exposing itself to debate in parliament, it will do a lot of things which will damage the country.

"One-day meeting confined only to the epidemic is only good because of health considerations. Political reason, it is not good," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that Perikatan must wait until it is "certified" by the Parliament before it takes back the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) money returned by the US Department of Justice (DoJ).

"Actually, at this time, the major decisions should not be made by the government, as it is not yet fully legalised, in the sense it has yet to be certified by the Parliament. We should do the usual routine work.

"For example, the money that was collected by the DoJ had been returned to this government," he said.

Dr Mahathir also expressed his concern on how the 1MDB money would be used by the present government.

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