

'Pakatan Plus' stymied over Dr Mahathir as PM candidate
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PAKATAN Harapan (PH) is in a limbo again as its parties cannot agree to how long Dr Mahathir Mohamad should stay on as prime minister, should the coalition return to power, sources told The Malaysian Insight.

After managing to agree that Dr Mahathir should be prime minister with PKR president Anwar Ibrahim as his deputy, the pact is now stuck on a timeline.

The coalition now comprises PKR, DAP and Amanah, and allies Parti Warisan Sabah and Dr Mahathir's faction from Bersatu.

Dubbed "PH Plus", leaders met last Saturday to cobble together an agreement as part of preparations for possible snap polls, as the current Perikatan Nasional government teeters on a slim majority.

At the meeting, a suggestion was made that Dr Mahathir be prime minister for a year instead of the six months originally proposed, a source said.

It cannot be verified which party had proposed six months and 12 months.

The proposal for Dr Mahathir as prime minister for six months was first made at the June 9 meeting.

This meeting did not reach a unanimous agreement on Dr Mahathir even being the prime minister candidate.

Just as PKR warmed up to the idea because of the six-month limit, the party was shocked by the suggestion on Saturday that Dr Mahathir stay on for a full year.

“We thought the issue of accepting him as prime minister could be resolved last Saturday, but the 12-month timeline has put everyone in limbo again,” said a PKR source.

“Before the decision can finalised by all the five parties involved, the goal post has been moved again.”

The source said the proposal for the 94-year-old to reprise the role of prime minister came as a surprise at first, as Dr Mahathir had resigned on February 23 after his party Bersatu withdrew from PH against his wishes.

His resignation triggered the collapse of the PH government and enabled Bersatu president Muhyiddin Yassin to replace Dr Mahathir as prime minister and formed the Perikatan Nasional government.

“So, the suggestion that he wants to become prime minister again was surprising,” the PKR source said.

“PH Plus” was scheduled to meet today to resolve the issue but it was cancelled as Sabah Chief Minister and Warisan president Shafie Apdal could not attend.

Following the change of government in February, PH is currently re-organising itself to face Perikatan Nasional in snap polls.

The Straits Times quoted Bersatu supreme council member Wan Saiful Wan Jan saying last week that Muhyiddin might call for fresh elections to get a fresh mandate.

Currently, the Perikatan Nasional government is made up of 115 MPs comprising Barisan Nasional (43), Bersatu (33), PAS (18), GPS (18) and four from Sabah.

The opposition has 107 MPs, comprising DAP (42), PKR (37), Amanah (11), Warisan (9), Upko (1) and nine independents.

However, one from PKR (Lubok Antu) quit the party recently and declared support for Muhyiddin's government. – June 16, 2020.

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