

## **Remembering The First Anniversary Of The Collapse Of The Pakatan Government**

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Today, 23rd February 2021, is the first anniversary of the collapse of the Pakatan Harapan government. It was a day when Anwar Ibrahim, yet again, tried to grab power and ended up giving the government to Muhyiddin Yassin instead.

Yes, many Malaysians, in particular Umno and Pakatan Harapan supporters, are cursing and swearing at Muhyiddin and are accusing him of sorts of things. The truth is, Muhyiddin was just an 'innocent bystander' of sorts and the two main players were Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Anwar Ibrahim.

What happened on 23rd February 2020 was merely a culmination of a 23-year power-struggle between Anwar and Mahathir, which started in 1997.

Anwar tried to take advantage of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis to undermine Mahathir, like what happened to President Suharto in Indonesia. President Suharto was forced out in May 1998, but Mahathir refused to go.

The collapse of the Pakatan Harapan government on 23rd February 2020 was due to a failed coup which Anwar launched against Mahathir

Anwar then asked Umno Youth leader Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to attack Mahathir at the Umno General Assembly by releasing the list of Mahathir cronies, proxies, trustees and family members who had syphoned out billions in taxpayers' money by abusing their political connections.

Mahathir retaliated by also releasing the list of Anwar cronies, proxies, trustees and family members who had similarly syphoned out billions by also abusing their political connections.

As it turned out, the Anwar 'abuse of power list' was as long as the 'Mahathir abuse of power list'. This proved that those with dirty hands should not point fingers.

(Not many Malaysians, however, remember these two 1998 lists of billions of taxpayers' money that had been stolen by both Mahathir and Anwar).

The Anwar-Mahathir power-struggle was now official. It was just waiting for 'High Noon at the O.K. Corral' to determine who was going to win the gunfight.

The 23-year power-struggle between Mahathir and Anwar was officially launched by Zahid Hamidi in 1998

As fate would have it, Mahathir did not need to do anything. Anwar committed hara-kiri when he made a police report against Khalid Jafri's book, '50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tak Boleh Jadi PM'. This opened the way for the police to probe the allegations in the book.

Instead of investigating Khalid, the police investigated Anwar and came to the conclusion that the allegations of sexual misconduct and homosexual activities were true. The rest is already public knowledge but that essentially triggered the beginning of the end for Anwar.

From 1998 until 2018, Anwar and Mahathir engaged in running battles, but it did not appear like Anwar was going to win. It was now already 20 years and Anwar was serving his third jail term.

It appeared like Anwar was never going to walk into Putrajaya unless he made a deal with Mahathir. Twenty years of trying and three jail sentences was a strong enough indication of this. It was either do a deal with Mahathir or stay in jail.

And that was how the Pakatan Harapan deal with Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia or PPBM was struck.

Azmin first met Mahathir in London in February 2015 to propose a deal that would include releasing Anwar from jail

PPBM or Bersatu was formed on 8th September 2016 the same way that Parti Keadilan Nasional (now called PKR) was formed on 4th April 1999. PKR was formed as an anti-Mahathir platform while Bersatu was formed as an anti-Najib platform.

The quarrel between Mahathir and Najib and how the 1MDB issue was used as a catalyst to attack Najib (just like the '50 Dalil' book was used as a catalyst against Anwar in 1998) is another story and a story already told many times.

In essence, Mahathir, Muhyiddin, Mukhriz (the 3Ms) and their Bersatu party had the same objective as Anwar, PKR, DAP, and Pakatan Harapan — which is to oust Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak and the Umno-Barisan Nasional government. Hence it made a lot of sense to work together.

Earlier, Anwar loyalist, Azmin Ali, had met up with Mahathir in London in February 2015 to propose a deal to work together to oust Najib, which would involve releasing Anwar from jail. Mahathir, however, rejected the deal.

In 2017, after the creation of Bersatu, the discussion of the proposal to work together to oust Najib was resurrected — but this time it included to also allow Mahathir to become Prime Minister for two years if they successfully oust Najib and Umno-Barisan Nasional (plus, of course, to release Anwar from jail).

On 10th May 2018, Najib proposed an Umno-PKR-BN government but Anwar rejected the proposal and went with Mahathir instead

In May 2018, Pakatan Harapan, now with the inclusion of Bersatu, won the 14th General Election or GE14. Najib frantically got in touch with Anwar and proposed a backdoor deal to form an Umno-PKR-Barisan Nasional government.

The plan was for Najib to remain as Prime Minister with Anwar as the Deputy Prime Minister after he is granted a pardon and gets released from jail. But Anwar had already agreed for Mahathir to take over as Prime Minister, for only two years, after which he will take over.

Anwar saw that the deal with Mahathir was safer than the deal with Najib. Bersatu was too small to be a threat to PKR while Umno was bigger-stronger and could 'swallow' PKR. So, Mahathir was a safer option as his party was weaker and could easily be ousted when the time came for Anwar to take over (while Umno might do a 'reverse-takeover').

However, Bersatu wisely began taking in 'new recruits' (or 'cross-overs', if you wish) and it soon was no longer a small-weaker party. Mahathir then announced he may not leave after two years after all.

In short, Mahathir had no intention to hand over the Prime Ministership to Anwar.

Realising that Mahathir had played him out, Anwar began plotting his ouster. On 23rd February 2020, Anwar launched the coup to oust Mahathir. But Mahathir was prepared to commit hara-kiri to prevent Anwar from taking over as Prime Minister. Mahathir resigned as Prime Minister and brought down the government, and Anwar lost the gunfight at the O.K. Corral.

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Sources: <https://www.malaysia-today.net/2021/02/23/remembering-the-first-anniversary-of-the-collapse-of-the-pakatan-government/>