

Who's who in Malaysia's power play

- A one-time deputy prime minister under the Najib administration before he was sacked for speaking out on the 1MDB scandal, Tan Sri Muhyiddin, 73, joined hands with Tun Dr Mahathir to oust BN in the 2018 national polls.

- He held the powerful Home Minister portfolio in Dr Mahathir's administration but was propelled to the premiership after Dr Mahathir resigned and the Pakatan Harapan government collapsed in February.

- However, his hold on his seven-month-old Perikatan Nasional government – an alliance of 13 parties – is tenuous: he commands only 113 MPs in the 222-strong Parliament.

- Malaysia's general election is not due until 2023, but Mr Muhyiddin has said he may hold a snap election sooner if his coalition wins the state polls today in Sabah, where he is currently campaigning.

- Following Mr Anwar's announcement, Mr Muhyiddin has maintained that he is still the legitimate leader, but his options are increasingly running out. He could either advise the King to dissolve Parliament to pave the way for a snap election, or Mr Muhyiddin could announce that he has lost the majority and allow Mr Anwar to take over.

PRIME MINISTER MUHYIDDIN YASSIN



OPPOSITION LEADER ANWAR IBRAHIM



- Always the bridesmaid, never the bride. Datuk Seri Anwar, 73, has come tantalisingly close to the premiership twice – in the 1990s when he was deputy prime minister before he was fired and jailed for six years on charges of sodomy and abuse of power, and in 2018 when he waited patiently for former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad to fulfil a pledge to eventually name him prime minister.

- On Wednesday, he dropped a bombshell that he has a "strong, convincing, formidable majority" to form a new government and that the government of Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin has "collapsed".

- There is scepticism over Mr Anwar's claims, especially since he refused to state the number of pledges he has from MPs and no leaders from across the aisle have openly pledged support for him.

- Moreover, back in September 2008, he claimed he had secured enough support to topple the then Barisan Nasional (BN) government led by Tun Abdullah Badawi but the claim quickly fizzled out.



FORMER PM MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

- Malaysia's longest-serving prime minister came out of retirement to join hands with former foes to oust then PM Najib Razak. He became PM for a second time when his Pakatan Harapan (PH) coalition won the 2018 general election, but his government crumbled less than two years later after PH's allies, including his own party, left the government, triggering the collapse of the PH administration.

- Since then, Dr Mahathir, 95, has formed a new party, Pejuang, with his faction of four MPs. Mr Anwar said on Wednesday that Pejuang is not part of his new alliance, although it may join later.

- Following the latest political uncertainty, Dr Mahathir has asserted that a vote of no confidence should be held in Parliament to determine if Mr Muhyiddin still has the majority support to lead the government.



UMNO PRESIDENT AHMAD ZAHID HAMIDI

- Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid, 67, took over the reins of the Malay party in 2018 after predecessor Najib Razak stepped down after the party's defeat in the general election.

- Since the party's poor performance in the national polls, he has worked hard to make the party relevant again among its Malay-Muslim votebank – including joining hands with former foe PAS, and forming a working alliance with Mr Muhyiddin's Perikatan Nasional pact.

- After Mr Anwar's announcement, Mr Ahmad Zahid, who is also chief of the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition, said he knew that "many" MPs from his party and coalition have voiced support for Mr Anwar to form a new government.

NUMBERS GAME

Total seats in Parliament:

222

Minimum needed to control House:

112

Perikatan Nasional: 113

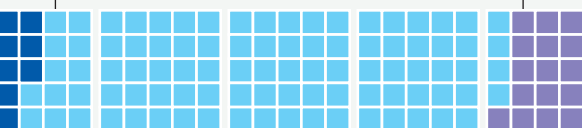


Perikatan Nasional ●

Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu): 31, Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS): 18, Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA): 2, Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC): 1, Gabungan Parti Sarawak alliance: 18, Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS): 1, Parti Solidariti Tanah Airku Rakyat Sabah (Star): 1, Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS): 1, Independent: 1, *Umno: 39

*Umno president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has said the party would not stop its MPs from backing Anwar as prime minister, but to date, no one has openly expressed support.

Pakatan Harapan (PH): 91



Pakatan Harapan (PH) ●

Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR): 38, Democratic Action Party (DAP): 42, Parti Amanah Negara (Amanah): 11

Other opposition parties ●

Pejuang: 5, Parti Warisan Sabah (Warisan): 9, Muda: 1, United Progressive Kinabalu Organisation (Upko): 1

Other opposition parties: 16



Others ●

Parti Sarawak Bersatu (PSB): 2

MALAYSIA'S KING, SULTAN ABDULLAH RI'AYATUDDIN



- Only Sultan Abdullah, 61, can resolve the growing political impasse. While his role is largely ceremonial, the monarch has the sole power to appoint the prime minister whom he believes enjoys the majority support of the elected representatives in Parliament. If that is not viable, he can also – on the advice of the prime minister – dissolve Parliament, after which an election has to be held within 60 days.