

# BARISAN CAN LOSE: P M

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— Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad

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By ROBERT HO

**KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned Barisan Nasional members today not to rule out the possibility of a defeat for the coalition in the coming general election.**

He said overconfidence among component party members, including Umno, could lead to the Barisan's downfall.

If the Barisan lose this time, "we will continue to lose forever," Dr Mahathir said at the joint-opening of the Batu, Lembah Pantai and Seputeh Umno divisional delegates' assembly here.

Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan chairman and Umno president, said that since Independence, Umno and its partners had been winning the general elections easily.

He said these victories, in particular the "big victory" in 1982, had led Barisan members to view elections as an opportunity to gain positions.

They completely disregarded the possibility that the coalition might lose and no longer rule the country, he added.

Dr Mahathir said it was his duty to remind party members not to regard a Barisan and Umno victory as a certainty.

"When we become too arrogant and believe we cannot lose, we will be re-

minded that we are not infallible," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Barisan members must not set aside the qualities needed to ensure a victory because of their overconfidence.

"If we put discipline, good leadership, rules and regulations behind us and act according to our whims and fancy, I am sure we will lose," he said.

The Umno president also noted that the opposition parties, jealous of the Barisan's success, had started using dirty tactics to discredit Barisan leaders

in view of the coming election.

The dirty tactics, he said, included circulating pamphlets containing allegations of corruption against government leaders and so-called evidence that "proved" the Barisan did not live up to its *clean, efficient and trustworthy* slogan.

He said there were already people, including Umno members, who believed that such allegations and claims were true.

"If even Umno members can believe these (allegations), then the pamphlets will be more effective among the fence-sitters and one hundred per cent effective among our enemies," he said.

This, he added, showed that dirty tactics could be effective and could erode the people's confidence and trust in the Government.

Dr Mahathir also said that one of the pamphlets had a photograph of him sitting with former Bumiputra Malaysia Finance chairman Lorrian Esme Osman and Kevin Hsu, another key figure in the BMF loans scandal.

This photograph was to "prove" his involvement in the scandal "because people normally believe where there is smoke, there is fire," he said.

He said the photograph was taken either in 1978 or 1979 when he led trade delegation to Hong Kong.

It was taken at a dinner hosted by BMF for the delegation, he said and added that there are many photographs taken of him with people whom he did not know during his trip overseas.

Dr Mahathir also reminded Umno members of a need to appreciate the role of the non-Malays in the elections.

He urged the members not to neglect them because not all the Malay voters in Malay-dominated constituencies supported Umno and Barisan candidates.

"In my constituency (Kubang Pasu), for example, half the Malay voters support the opposition while the other half support Umno," he said.

"The ones who will determine whether a candidate wins or loses, will be the non-Malay voters who form the minority."

Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Ali and Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Shahrir Abdul Samad were also present.