

We'll use JB polls lessons in Parit

Raja: Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said the lessons learnt from the Barisan Nasional's defeat in the Johore Baru parliamentary by-election would be used in the contest for the Parit Raja State by-election.

The Prime Minister said "we learnt a lot of things" from the Johore Baru experience. He did not elaborate.

Incumbent Johore Baru MP Datuk Shahrir Samad retained his seat despite strong opposition from Barisan and PSRM in the Aug 25 by-election.

Speaking to reporters after chairing a four-hour Umno Baru supreme council meeting here, Dr Mahathir also declined to disclose the by-election post-mortem report submitted by acting Johore Menteri Besar Datuk Yunus Sulaiman during the meeting.

He said the report was discussed thoroughly but for the time being it could not be revealed.

Datuk Yunus, when approached by reporters after the meeting, said the Barisan will "go on the offensive" in trying to retain the Parit Raja seat.

He said the experience gathered in Johore Baru would be used to "neutralise the tricks deployed by the opposition".

Dr Mahathir said the Barisan would contest the Parit Raja seat with more vigour.

The Razaleigh-Musa group, still flushed from the Johore Baru victory, has announced that it would field a candidate for the Parit Raja by-election.

On former Umno deputy president Datuk Musa Hitam's willingness to hold reconciliatory talks with the Umno Baru leadership, Dr Mahathir said he was prepared to hold such talks.

He said he had never "closed the door" on Datuk Musa and was prepared to have thorough discussions.

However, he disagreed that the talks should be limited to him, Encik Ghafar Baba, Datuk Musa and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

"We should allow as many people to attend the talks and without any conditions attached," he added.