

26 JUL 2002
Mahathir-BN
ABDULLAH MIGHT LEAD BN IN NEXT ELECTION

GENTING HIGHLANDS, July 26 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight indicated the possibility of Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi leading the Barisan Nasional (BN) in the next general election.

The Prime Minister said that by then Abdullah, who is now Deputy Prime Minister, would probably have become the Prime Minister and the BN chairman.

This came to light when Dr Mahathir was asked by reporters on his statement in Johor Baharu yesterday whereby he had advised BN component parties to accept all decisions pertaining to the allocation of seats in the next general election.

"I'm merely suggesting, furthermore it will not be for me to choose, it will be for Datuk Abdullah. By the time we hold the election, Datuk Abdullah will probably become the PM and BN chairman," he said at a news conference after opening the first phase of the RM1.2 billion First World Hotel and Plaza here.

Asked whether the general election would be held after October next year, Dr Mahathir said, "That you have to wait. We'll see."

According to earlier reports, Dr Mahathir would relinquish his post as Prime Minister after the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit in Kuala Lumpur in October next year.

Asked of the BN's chances in the general election, Dr Mahathir said it was too early to talk about that.

However, he said the BN was always ready to face the election.

When asked whether he was indicating that the general election was near by talking about seat allocation in Johor Baharu, he replied: "No indication, the possibility is that when we revise the electoral boundaries, there might be extra (seats).

"If so, who will get? That was what I said, not about election," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he would continue to help the BN even though he was no longer Prime Minister in future.

-- BERNAMA

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