

**The doc asks: Do you feel good?**  
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There is no doubt in the former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's mind that the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition will win big in the coming general election, whenever it is held.

"It will be a repeat of 2004," the former premier told reporters at a press conference at his Perdana Leadership Foundation office in Putrajaya.

However, no one present at the news conference was sure if he was serious or if the former strongman was just oozing more sarcasm than usual.

"Oh, tetap. Tetap menang. Lebih 90 percent (Oh, yes. Definite victory. More than 90 percent)," he said.

While the elections are not due till April 2009, many pundits believe Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will call for a snap poll, possibly by the end of this year.

Mahathir, 81, was also back to attacking his successor, claiming that the 'feel good factor' which Abdullah said was vital before calling a snap poll, was never there in the first place.

After taking over from Mahathir in 2003, Abdullah called for a general election five months later and was returned to power with the best ever mandate achieved by a ruling coalition leader.

### **What feel good factor?**

At that time, Abdullah was relying on the 'feel good factor', stating that his administration would be clean and corrupt-free.

Earlier this week, Abdullah was asked to comment on the speculations of an early election and the premier responded by saying that he was waiting for the 'feel good factor' to get even better before calling for the elections.

Mahathir was not buying this.

"All the time, they say that everything is fine. And then one day they say the feel good factor has come back. But if everything is fine, how can it come back?" he asked.

"And now you wait for more things to come. And I'm looking around - do you feel good?" he added.

On a question on the purpose of the Abdullah-launched 'Mission 2057' - a 50-year development guideline beyond Vision 2020 - Mahathir cut the reporter short and said: "Good. I won't be around. Even 2020 I won't be around."

Adding later, he said: "2020, 2057, 2100 ... we need targets".

Mahathir had launched Vision 2020 as a target for the nation to join the ranks of the rich world.

### **Abdullah's excellent leadership**

Mahathir's sarcasm also extended to the recent Napoleon Hill Global Leadership Award bestowed on Abdullah in recognition of his outstanding leadership.

"Tahniah banyak, banyak (Lots of congratulations). Saya tak dapat (I didn't receive it). I'm not that cemerlang (excellent). So I didn't get it," he said.

Earlier, Mahathir had joked to reporters that he has better things to do than to answer questions at a press conference: "You think I'm retired, I don't have any work to do?"

He had asked whether the questions were about the Kuala Lumpur Malay Chamber of Commerce. Reporters gave him the pleasure of saying no.

Mahathir appointed 12 new honorary members of the Kuala Lumpur Malay Chamber of Commerce, which includes his son Muhkriz, Transparency International-Malaysia president Ramon Navaratnam and local think-tank Asli chief executive officer Michael Yeoh.

Mahathir is a grand fellow of the chamber of commerce.

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