

**Daim expects opposition to win more seats in S'wak**  
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Former finance minister Daim Zainuddin today predicted that the opposition will win more seats in the coming Sarawak election, but BN will still remain the state government with a "comfortable majority".

Additionally, the former politician and lawyer by training said in a talk at Universiti Tun Abdul Razak in Kuala Lumpur today, Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud's announcement that he will step down after the polls was a "good move".

I think BN will win, with a bit more seats going to the opposition, but (the ruling coalition) will have a comfortable majority," said Daim (left).

"It is good that Taib says that he is going to retire. Nobody should overstay (their welcome). Look at (ousted Egypt president Hosni) Mubarak and the ousted president of Tunisia (Zein al Abidine Ben Ali).

"You cannot say that you cannot find a successor, that can't be the case. Suppose that I die today and I don't have a successor...

"We've had many prime ministers and some more successful than others, but in the process we learn to reject (them)," he said to titters from the full house audience.

Daim said this in reply to question from the floor on his predictions on the Sarawak election.

In late 2007, he predicted that BN would have problems in three states - Selangor, Kedah and Penang - and was proven right in the 2008 elections.

**Malaysia guilty of disregarding environment**

In his speech on political economy at the university, Daim who was finance minister through the 1980s and 1990s financial crises, said one of his "deepest concerns" is the nation's increasing disregard for environmental preservation.

"If unmanaged and not undertaken seriously, the effect will be severe... global warming, the thinning of the ozone layer and plundered forests, all committed in the name of economic growth.

"We too have been somewhat guilty of this. Of late, we have been reminded by members of the civil society that the price we are paying is high," he said.

While he did not mention specifics, Malaysia has most recently been under the spotlight for rapid deforestation, particularly in the state of Sarawak, by both international media and environment watchdogs.

Abdul Taib, however, has insisted that 70 percent of Sarawak's virgin rainforest remains intact.

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