

Dr M: Najib may need to step down if BN fares badly

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By Hazlan Zakaria

Like his predecessor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak may have to step down if BN fails to do well in the coming polls, contends former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"I say theoretically, if he does not do well, of course his position will not be stable," Mahathir told reporters at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

He said this when asked to comment on his interview with foreign news service AFP, during which he made the same remark, though the veteran Umno leader explained that this was just his view of things, which may not necessarily pan out.

To another question, Mahathir refused to name any person who should replace Najib as prime minister if he did step down.

"I don't have any candidate (in mind). I don't expect that to happen... I said theoretically only," he explained.

Asked to comment on the ongoing wait for the dissolution of Parliament, Mahathir again said this was up to the PM of the day.

"I have been told that a certain state assembly will automatically dissolve and I think that soon Parliament will also dissolve (automatically).

"Maybe before that, if the PM wants to dissolve, then he can."

If I was PM, I'd call GE last year

However, Mahathir repeated his belief that the ideal time to dissolve Parliament should have been last year.

"But I do not have power. If I was the prime minister, Parliament would have already been dissolved last year."

Quizzed about the English language daily New Straits Times' interview with former finance minister Mohd Daim Zainuddin, on "deadwood" that should be removed from the BN's cabinet line-up, Mahathir agreed wholeheartedly.

"I agree entirely. Lots of deadwood should be chopped down and thrown away and new trees grown," he said with his trademark sarcasm.

On the apparent do-or-die blitzkrieg of DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang and senior party leaders into the Umno stronghold of Johor, Mahathir said whether or not the

opposition party's belief in its splendid chance of capturing the state would come true remained to be seen.

"Johor is normally a stronghold of BN. Maybe they have found out something about the feelings of the people of Johor.

"So they think they can win in Johor, but they say the proof of the pudding is in the eating. We'll see what happens when the election is on," the wily former premier concluded drily.

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