

Najib could face ouster with Mukhriz veep win
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A win for Kedah Menteri Besar Mukhriz Mahathir in the fast-approaching Umno polls, in which the latter is vying for one of three vice-presidents posts, could well spell the end of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's position as Umno number one, international affairs weekly The Economist has reported.

In an analysis piece featured on its online site today, the weekly stated that this is due to the fact that Mukhriz is the youngest son of the nation's longest-serving prime minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, known for his Malay-centric views.

"The champion of bumiputera policies remains a hero to many Malays, and his (Mahathir's) lustre rubs off on his son.

NONE"Should Mukhriz (left) win, the anti-Najib forces could coalesce around him as a proxy for his father," it stated in the report.

It pointed out following the results of the May 5 general election, which saw a large swing of non-Malay votes towards the opposition, especially that of the Chinese community, Najib was forced to "backtrack abruptly" on his multi-racial political platform which he initially stood on when he first took office, having even coined the '1Malaysia' phrase.

To cater to party hardliners, Najib has since announced affirmative measures under the Bumiputera Economic Empowerment (BEE) programme.

More recently, Najib seemed to have rescinded on his earlier promise to do away with preventative laws when the government this week tabled amendments to the Prevention of Crime Act 1959, which, if passed, would reimpose detention without trial for up to two years at a time.

While this seemed to have saved "Najib's skin" as he is not facing any competition for party president post this time around, quoting veteran editor and Umno critic A Kadir Jasin, The Economist said this would prove to be a "temporary respite" should Mahathir junior win at the party polls.

"A weakened prime minister could then be ousted in an internal putsch, a fate that befell Najib's predecessor, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who also failed to deliver at the polls," stated The Economist.

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