

Mahathir plugs 'ex-DPM' as next prime minister

MalaysiaKini.com

Oct 8th, 2015

Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants to see a "former deputy prime minister" take over the leadership reins.

Although he did not mention names, the former premier was referring to Muhyiddin Yassin (photo), who was sacked as number two in July.

In an interview with The Diplomat, Mahathir when asked who should be the next leader, replied "normally" it would be "the former deputy president of Umno".

Quizzed further on any specific names, Mahathir said maybe the former DPM.

"But now, of course, things are very free," he said.

Muhyiddin despite being replaced by Umno vice-president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi as DPM, is still the Umno deputy president.

Mahathir has been a vocal critic of Najib since April following the 1MDB debacle, and with Malaysia's currency value in decline against the US dollar, the former premier did not mince his words on the present PM.

When asked how to raise investor confidence in Malaysia, Mahathir who led the country for 22 years said he thinks if Najib is not there, the confidence will return.

He recognised that it may not be easy but all these things can be done if the PM is not there.

Pessimistic on Najib stepping down

Mahathir however felt pessimistic when asked if Najib would step down.

Najib is also seen under pressure when the Conference of Rulers had on Tuesday, issued a statement wanting investigation into his pet-project 1MDB to be completed as soon as possible and action be taken against those who have committed wrongdoings.

On qualities of a good leader, Mahathir emphasised that a leader must be concerned about the country, not about himself.

"You have to, to a certain extent, preserve your position, but the preservation is possibly because it enables you to do things that are good for the country," he said.

Mahathir had previously not only criticised Najib but also his wife Rosmah Mansor, where he questioned her penchant for expensive taste especially during their daughter's wedding.

The former premier also do not have kind words for Najib regarding Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), where he claimed that the PM did not study the implications.

“Even if he does study, his policy is to be friendly with Americans. So he is prepared to disregard the national interest in favor of being friendly with America and complying with American ideas,” he criticised.

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/314975>