

## **Mahathir a leader with a 'super ego', says PM**

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has described his predecessor Dr Mahathir Mohamad as a leader with a 'super ego'.

"If he fights, he must win, tries to win. Now he is not successful, he will be more aggressive with his words," Najib said in a special interview held in conjunction with the 2016 Umno general assembly, which begins tonight with the Wanita, Youth and Puteri sessions.

The one-hour interview was moderated by Hamdan Ahmir and participated by *Utusan Malaysia* editor Zulkefli Hamzah and RTM television personality Sayed Munawar Sayed Mohd Mustar.

Najib, who is also Umno president, said Mahathir's efforts to topple him through the Citizens' Declaration failed because it was legally and constitutionally invalid and rejected by the Meeting of the Council of Rulers last month.

As such, Najib said, Mahathir had no choice but to attack him as he felt that to destroy Umno, the party president must first be toppled.

"When Dr Mahathir was the Umno president, the same people who are with him today said he was really worse. If we look back at the tapes, their old videos, they said Dr Mahathir was worse.

"This is the process of politics, political games. So now that he has not succeeded, he will be more aggressive in his words," said Najib.

Asked to share his secret of facing the condemnations calmly, Najib said: "I understand leaders like Dr Mahathir, his methods and message (that he uses)."

Najib also said the strong support from the party members as well as the MPs from the BN were also factors that helped him.

"I see that PAS is also not with him. During the tabling of the Budget 2017, PAS did not support the opposition's (Pakatan Harapan) rejection of the budget," he said.

### **'Do not underestimate the rivals'**

Najib also went on to remind Umno members not to underestimate rival party Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia, led by former Umno deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin.

The prime minister said although the establishment of the new party did not create a groundswell of support, Umno had to strive to retain the power in hand.

"The support is unlike the phenomenon when Anwar Ibrahim quit Umno to establish PKR.

The effects are not the same. In divisions or parliamentary constituencies, there will be dissatisfied people who recruit others to join them and to fight us.

"We are not scared of them but we must never underrate them and strive to retain power," Najib said in the question-and-answer session.

On the impact of the new party's alliance with Pakatan Harapan on BN, Najib said the rakyat should evaluate and choose between BN led by Umno or Harapan led by DAP.

"The rakyat must know about DAP's policy, struggle and stand. They will abolish the bumiputera agenda and will never support anything to do with it. This is the reality.

"As for the position of Islam, our efforts are to develop Islam and to uphold Islamic teachings. What is DAP's stand on this?

Asked about Umno's struggle to champion Malays and Islam, he said the rakyat should view the policy on the whole as Umno practises the principle of moderation (wasatiyyah), progressive and transformation.

Najib said the rakyat should not judge Umno by the actions of several members who were extreme in their struggle to defend the party.

"What they do out of frustration is not Umno's doing. They are just several individuals or a small group," he added.

- *Bernama*