

Give 3-month notice for dissolution, PM urged
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Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang has urged Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to give at least three months' notice before dissolving Parliament for general election.

Lim wants an assurance from Abdullah that he would not follow the example set by former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who, for the 1999 general election, dissolved Parliament when the 2000 budget was in midstream.

He said that the dissolution of Parliament in November 1999 when debate on the annual budget was at midpoint was a gross and cynical abuse of power and utter contempt for parliamentary process, and should not be followed by Abdullah.

"There was no justification for the dissolution as there was no constitutional crisis involving the possible collapse of the government because of withdrawal of support of the majority of MPs.

"It is only right that the dissolution takes place before Sept 7, when the 2008 budget will be presented to Parliament, or in December when the budget is approved by all stages," he said.

Final reports

Lim said that the three-month notice will allow adequate time for parliamentary select committees to submit final reports which could be debated in Parliament.

"The Parliamentary Select Committee on National Unity and National Service had submitted an interim report which was debated in Parliament early this month, but it still has to draft and present its final report," he said.

The Parliamentary Select Committee on Integrity, he said, is now in complete disarray with the sudden resignation of its chairperson Bernard Dompok, adding there is no clue how a final report will be drafted and presented to Parliament.

He also explained that the Parliamentary Select Committee on Code of Ethics for MPs has yet to hold its first meeting.

"If Parliament is suddenly dissolved without notice, all three select committees will lapse."

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