

Tough for Najib to get two-thirds, says ex-PM
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Prime Minister Najib Razak will have an uphill battle regaining two-thirds majority in Parliament in the next general election, no thanks to the lacklustre performance of his predecessor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, says Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"(Najib) inherited a bad government. He is better than number five (Badawi) who was totally incompetent," he told reporters today.

Speaking on the sidelines of an international forum at Kuala Lumpur today, Mahathir (*left*) spared no mercy for Abdullah, who was his handpicked successor, saying that the latter had wasted the strong mandate he received in the 2004 general election.

"When you have two-thirds majority, it should be used for doing the right things. In the four years, 2004 to 2008 (Abdullah) did the wrong things (so) in 2008 he lost it," he said.

He was somewhat kinder to Najib, saying that the current PM was now "trying to put things right".

In his expressing his appreciation for Najib's efforts, the veteran politician also took a swing at his former deputy and now Opposition Leader, Anwar Ibrahim.

"He is having a difficult time. (Najib has) some good ideas and some not so good ideas. I hope he does (garner support) because the alternative is that someone who is worse may take power," Mahathir said.

'Spending money is good'

Asked about Budget 2011, Mahathir shrugged off commentators who claimed that what Najib unveiled last Friday was a return to "Mahathirism" because of the emphasis on mega projects.

"I did not present it... it does not look like my budget. If everyone who wants to spend money (is said to be acting like me), then it must be my budget," he said in jest.

Nevertheless, the veteran politician added that he advocated spending in order to "create more jobs and opportunities to do business".

"Spending money is good, so much so that there was not much after I left," he said, inviting laughter from reporters.

However, he sidestepped a question on the necessity of the 100-storey Menara Warisan Merdeka, saying that "the government thinks it needs it, so perhaps there is a reason".

The elder statesman, who was behind the 88-storey Petronas Twin Towers, suffered criticism when the idea was proposed more than a decade ago.