

Najib : I'm no coward
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Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today dismissed a claim by former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad that he was a coward for failing to speak up about the real reasons behind the Barisan Nasional's dismal performance in the recent general election. MCPX

"I'm not a coward," the Umno deputy president said when asked to comment on Mahathir's claim made in Manchester, England, on Saturday.

Mahathir had said that he had second thoughts about Najib becoming the prime minister because the former prime minister claimed that Najib was not "brave enough" to directly say anything that was not liked by Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

According to Bernama today, Najib said: "It is not a question of being 'Mr Yes Man' or being not brave enough or afraid because I hold to the principle that the best way is to have an organised transfer of power, in a respectable way."

"That would be meaningful and would determine that the party's interests are not undermined," he told reporters.

The deputy prime minister said Umno's history would show that the transfer of power from the first prime minister, the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, to Abdul Razak Hussein proceeded smoothly.

"The late Hussein Onn handed over the office of prime minister to Mahathir also in a proper way, with tradition dictating the best way practised in the party.

"In my opinion, that's the best way and method for us to execute a change in the country's leadership, as was stated by the prime minister and party president," he said.

Give a chance

He said the transfer of power should be given the chance to take place in a respectable way as all decisions in the short term would have an impact on Umno.

"If we do anything at this time, when Umno and BN are not as strong as they were prior to the general election, we will need time to rehabilitate Umno," he said.

He said disputes and friction would definitely take place and result in two or three factions in the party, which would weaken Umno and the BN.

"We cannot afford to allow such a situation to take place in the party, which can cause a major problem for the government and country," he said.

In the aftermath of the general election Mahathir has been very critical of Abdullah's governance, many a times asking the premier to step down in favour of Najib.

However lately Mahathir has said that he was not sure if Najib would be a suitable prime minister, suggesting that there were others in the party who could eventually become the

top leader.

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