

Mahathir warns of unrest amid political turmoil
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Dr Mahathir Mohamad has warned of possible unrest in multi-racial Malaysia, accusing his successor, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, of failing to assert his authority.
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mahathir at book launch 150508 01 "Now we are seeing the different races making demands on the government, which they perceive as a weak government," the former premier told reporters in Tokyo yesterday.

He said "extremists" among different communities had begun to voice their opposition and make unfair demands on the government, trying to "divide rather than unite."

Recently there have been growing fears over "Islamisation" of Malaysia and the increasing polarisation of the three main ethnic communities.

About 60 percent of Malaysia's 27 million people are ethnic Malay Muslims. The country's minority Chinese and Indians are mostly Buddhists, Hindus or Christians.

The answer

Mahathir recently resigned from the ruling United Malays National Organisation (Umno) and urged other party members to follow his lead, in a call analysts said could split the party and topple the government.

"Because of this weakness (of the government) there is a tendency for centrifugal forces to draw away from each other. The answer to this is for the prime minister to step down. He has not acknowledged that he has failed the party," he said.

Mahathir ruled Malaysia for 22 years until 2003, when he picked Abdullah as his successor. But the two soon fell out and Mahathir began accusing the premier of corruption, nepotism and mismanagement.

The 82-year-old political veteran has actively campaigned for Abdullah to step down after March elections that produced the worst results in the history of the Umno. Abdullah has refused to budge.

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