

Every second with Pak Lah spells doom for Umno
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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad continued to attack his handpicked successor although Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had agreed to hand over the reins next March.

"Three months is not a long time," he conceded, but on the same note added: "(Taking into account) the present Umno and national politics, a lot of rehabilitation efforts will be affected by this baseless postponement (of power transition)."

"This is because the damage inflicted by Abdullah on Umno is so severe that every second rehabilitation is delayed could have a negative impact on the party and Barisan Nasional," he noted in his latest blog posting.

According to Mahathir, Umno and BN component parties have been reduced to tatters in the five years under Abdullah.

He also pointed out that as long as Abdullah remained at the helm, it would affect premier-in-waiting Najib Abdul Razak's efforts to "rehabilitate all that needs to be rehabilitated".

"Maybe there are those who would defend Abdullah by claiming that the damage had been there for a long time and it was inherited by him.

"If this true, then why was Umno and BN given a 2/3 majority in every general election since 1974?" asked the former premier who stepped down in 2003 after leading the nation for 22 years.

He also underscored the fact that the ruling coalition had never failed to control the states of Kedah, Perak and Selangor as well as Penang since Gerakan joined BN.

How did 2004 happen?

Mahathir reiterated that even in the 1999 elections, when a vast majority of the Malay voters were upset with Umno as a result of the sacking of Anwar Ibrahim, BN still won a 2/3 majority.

If the damage was inherited, Mahathir said, how could BN achieve an extraordinary win in the 2004 polls where it captured almost 90 percent of the seats in the Dewan Rakyat and wrested control of Terengganu from PAS.

The results, he added, revealed that Umno and BN were 'healthy and strong' when the reins were handed over to Abdullah.

Mahathir said if the March 2008 elections was not proof enough of the deterioration of Umno and BN, the Pematang Pauh by-election in August, which saw Anwar returning to Parliament after a 10-year absence, clearly showed that Umno had become a 'dwarf'.

He said Umno's fear for the opposition had reached a point where its members were afraid to don Umno or BN badges and apparels.

pm abduallah ahmad badawi suspend eurocopter ec725 deal ministry of defense event 281008 02" What happened in the 2008 elections is that a lot of members and supporters of Umno and BN had voted for the opposition. Is this because they were attracted to the causes championed by PAS, DAP and PKR?

"Research showed that they were not enamoured by PAS' 'Islamic state', DAP's 'Malaysian Malaysia' or

PKR's 'Reformasi'. With a heavy heart, they voted for the opposition because of their disappointment with Abdullah's leadership and the actions and attitude of an ungrateful cabinet," he said.

Mahathir also stressed that the road to recovery would be a long road and would require determination and grit from the Umno leaders.

"Many errors of the Abdullah administration have to be corrected. The economic slowdown, the loss of job opportunities, the increase in the price of goods and the lack of contracts for small contractors must be addressed by Najib and his team," he said.

At the same time, Mahathir said, the practice of abusing power to enrich family members must be stopped.

"The luxurious lifestyles of party and government leaders must come to an end. Contracts have to be given fairly and not only to specific political leaders as a bribe to garner support," he added.

Rampant corruption

The second biggest damage which happened and grew under Abdullah's leadership, according to Mahathir, is bribery among Umno leaders and members at all levels.

"This took place because Abdullah himself was seen as prime minister who used his position and power to ensure the success of the business ventures of his son, son-in-law and other family members," he said.

parliament stimulus package najib 041108 pc 02Mahathir stressed that corruption among Umno leaders and members had led the people to distrust the party and view it with scorn.

"If the Umno under the leadership of Najib is to be accepted and supported, then corruption in the party must be eradicated. This is not an easy task, but like it or not, Najib and his team must do their best.

"If not, the voters would vote whoever that gives them money and this includes the opposition parties. Umno and BN might no longer be able to run this country.

"We are now being given a preview of the type of administration which would be instituted by the opposition (if they come into power)," he said.

A reminder for the Malays

In another development, Umno vice-president Muhyiddin Yassin said Mahathir's recent statement that anyone could become prime minister was a reminder for the Malays to remain united and strong.

"What he (Mahathir) said does not have to be a polemic. It was just a reminder. I did not say that I agree or disagree (with the statement). I just said that it was a fact," he was quoted as saying by Bernama.

Muhyiddin said the Federal Constitution did not state that the position of prime minister was based on race.

Asked if he agreed with a non-Malay becoming prime minister, he said it would depend on how the people felt about it and the political scenario in the country in future.

On Mahathir's remark that those involved in money politics be arrested under the Internal Security Act, Muhyiddin said: "He was only joking."

"It could also mean that he is disappointed with what is happening in Umno in the campaign aspect and

the practice of using money (to secure votes)," he added.

Refusing to elaborate on the matter, the Umno vice-president said: "I do not want to talk a lot about this because I feel embarrassed to expose the weaknesses of my own party to the point that the media 'proudly' reports issues which are bad for my party."

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