

Dr Mahathir : Wan Farid a proxy for Pak Lah
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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad expressed disappointment with the selection of Wan Ahmad Farid as the Barisan Nasional candidate in the Kuala Terengganu by-election.

Wan Ahmad will contest the parliamentary seat that had been held by deputy education minister Razali Ismail up to his death on Nov 28 last year.

"The choice of the candidate by BN is really very bad because everybody sees him just as a proxy... someone to be used later on if Najib becomes the prime minister," Mahathir (left) claimed at a press conference in Putrajaya today.

While Mahathir did not elaborate, he was obviously referring to Wan Ahmad being closely linked to his successor-turned-nemesis Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The Umno candidate had served as political secretary to Abdullah when he was home minister in 2003.

Wan Ahmad had been appointed deputy home minister after the general election in March last year, and was reappointed a senator last month.

He resigned his ministerial post last Friday and his senatorial post today, in order to contest the by-election on Jan 17.

'PM's particular choice'

Mahathir also dismissed claims that the by-election is an important battle for Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, who is leading the election campaign.

"They are trying to project it as Najib's test (because) if he becomes the prime minister then these are people (including Wan Ahmad, right) who will be surrounding Najib," said Mahathir.

Asked whether he felt the opposition has a chance of bagging the seat, Mahathir said: "I don't know about the opposition having an upper hand but I think it is an even tide."

He said the by-election would not bring about much difference for the BN as "it is not a major fight".

"But of course, the candidate (from) Umno was the prime minister's particular choice, because he is working with the prime minister," he said.

Wan Farid will stand against Mohd Abdul Wahid of PAS and possibly Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia vice-president Harun Moham.

