

**Dr M gives Najib's speech thumbs up**  
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**Andrew Ong**

Former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad gave his protege Najib Abdul Razak the thumbs up for his maiden presidential address, but warned that the premier now has to live up to his promises.

Describing it as an "enthusiastic speech", Mahathir said Najib appeared to be aware of the problems within Umno and is charting ways for the party to regain support from the masses.

"It is relatively easy to make a speech and make promises. After that, people will be watching whether you deliver or not. Whether you walk the talk.

"After this, I'm quite sure not only Umno members but the whole country will be watching. The government and the party must deliver on their promises," said Mahathir (*left*), during a press conference after Najib's speech.

He said time was not on Umno's side and urged the party to engage the public and determine grouses they have with the government.

On the amendments to the party constitution meant to eradicate internal vote-buying, Mahathir was cautiously optimistic that it would resolve the problem.

"When it comes to money politics, there are people who will (still) try. I hope people will stop making use of money to be elected," he said.

On Najib's call for Umno to be more inclusive and engage other ethnic groups, Mahathir said it does not mean Barisan Nasional can do away with its race-based component parties.

**'Component parties in shambles'**

However, he said the component parties were currently "weak" and "in shambles".

Asked to comment on the on-going MCA feud, Mahathir hinted that its president Ong Tee Keat, who had a no-confidence vote passed against him last week, should step down.

"People must realise that if people don't want them, then people must be ready to step down. This culture of stepping down is not yet developed in this country.

"People want to stay on forever. After 30 years they still want to stay there," said Mahathir, who was also making a veiled dig at MIC president S Samy Vellu (*right*).

Mahathir also urged MCA to learn from Umno's leadership struggle in 1986 that split the party.

"From my experience, when the president's post is being contested, no matter who wins, you are going to lose half the party. That happened to me in 1986," he said.

On Ong's apparent no-show during Najib's speech, the acerbic statesman said: "Maybe he has some problems. How would we know? Maybe he has stomach ache".

Traditionally, component party leaders will attend the opening of the Umno general assembly and be present during the presidential address.

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