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I'm not the reason BN lost, says Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday denied that he was a factor in the Barisan Nasional's electoral setback, saying Umno members would not believe it.

Responding to the criticisms against him for his take on Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi following the general election, the former prime minister maintained that the BN's losses were due to Umno members switching sides "because they were so disappointed with the party leadership".

Almost simultaneously, party president Abdullah vowed

at Umno headquarters to go after the betrayers, who had been blamed for the loss of 14 parliamentary and 22 state seats.

Dr Mahathir said at a dialogue here that party members were not stupid enough to believe that the losses suffered in the last elections were due to his sniping as claimed by the party leadership.

Shortly before the elections, he had urged voters to vote in a stronger opposition.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir called on Umno members to have the courage to stand up to the party leadership.