

Dr M: Najib should not be PM

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He is not brave enough, says former PM

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MANCHESTER: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he had second thoughts about Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak becoming Prime Minister as Najib had failed to speak up about the real reasons behind Barisan Nasional's losses in the general election.

The former prime minister claimed that Najib was not "brave enough" to directly say anything that was not liked by his boss.

"We see that he is a *penakut* (coward). He is always saying, 'yes sir, yes sir, *saya sokong, saya sokong* (I sup-

port, I support)."

He said, when the prime minister blamed Barisan's losses on sabotage, Najib merely agreed to it.

Dr Mahathir cited another instance when Najib gave his full support for Malaysia to build a bridge to Singapore despite the republic's disagreement. But Najib suddenly changed his mind when Abdullah decided against the project, he added.

"I believe he should rightly explain the real reasons for Barisan's losses in the election," he said when asked on the reason for his change of mind

about Najib after giving a talk on "Malay, Malaysian and Malaysia: Challenges Ahead" at the University of Manchester on Saturday.

Dr Mahathir had earlier this month withdrawn his support for Najib to be prime minister but did not give his reason for doing so.

"I'm not so confident (about him taking over as prime minister). Even so, it all depends on Umno to appoint the person to be prime minister.

"Najib will have to face competition from others such as (Tan Sri) Muhyiddin Yassin, (Datuk Seri Dr

Rais Yatim, you never know."

He, however, said if Abdullah were to step down now, it would pave the way for a smooth transition as Najib would succeed him in accordance with Umno tradition.

Dr Mahathir also felt that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim would not be the sole candidate for Prime Minister if Pakatan Rakyat were to win in the next general election.

He believed there were other candidates as well, saying PAS was eyeing the post while (DAP's Lim) Guan Eng could be premier too.

"Anwar thinks he will be prime minister. It's not that they loved him but a marriage of convenience," he added.

On the plan to set up a judicial appointments commission and the goodwill ex-gratia payments to six senior judges, Dr Mahathir claimed it was a political move to boost the government's popularity.

He said there was no reason for the compensation because everything was done in accordance with the law.

"If they can show me the removal of (former Lord President) Tun Salleh Abas was against procedures prescribed by the law, please let me know," he said.