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# Examine losses, says Dr M

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## 'Action must be taken to make Barisan relevant'

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said his successor Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi should accept responsibility for Barisan Nasional's major losses in the general election and resign.

"Just as in 2004, the huge majority was reportedly 100% due to him as said by the then secretary-general of Umno, now he should also accept 100% responsibility," Dr Mahathir told a press conference yesterday.

Describing the coalition's per-

formance as "shocking", he said he was saddened by it.

"I expected Barisan to lose support but not this badly," he said of the Opposition victory in five states and 10 of the 13 parliamentary seats in the Federal Territories.

He said that while it was up to Umno to decide, one possibility was Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak taking over from Abdullah.

He said the fact that Indians, Chinese and Malays voted for the Opposition showed that it was not about racial politics but that on the whole, the people sent the same signal.



**Saddened by defeat:** Dr Mahathir giving journalists an overview of Barisan's performance in the 12th general election during a press conference at his house in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Malays and Umno members voted for the Opposition because they were affected by the high inflation, and despite the high economic growth figures announced by the Government and the launch of development corridors, the people did not feel the benefits, he said.

Asked if Barisan had miscalculated holding the election, he said postponing it by another year would have led to more pent-up frustrations.

He, however, said the Barisan concept was still relevant.

On the Opposition's position, he said there would be instability for some time but if the Opposition was good, it would be able to remedy the situation.

He said Barisan, with its simple majority, would form a weak government, which would make it difficult for it to run a multiracial country, and this would affect investor confidence.

On whether Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim contributed to the Opposition's victory, he said: "There is a strong feeling against Barisan rather than strong feelings for the Opposition.

"I can't think he is relevant, in the sense that he is not going to be a prime minister," he said.

He said Umno and Barisan Nasional could still remedy the situation if they continued to

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TENGGU  
RAZALEIGH



serve the people well and took note of their signals.

Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said the results were "not just a blow to Barisan and Umno but to the nation as a whole."

"Alongside losing our two-thirds majority in Parliament, we have lost a record number of states to the Opposition, including the home state of the Prime Minister," he said in a statement.

"The honesty with which we interpret this result, and the decisiveness with which we act on it, will determine whether we still have a future with the people.

"We must face it without further denial, self-deception or media spin."

