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Dr M: Najib best candidate to lead nation and BN

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KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there was no other more suitable candidate than Datuk Seri Najib Razak to helm the nation and Barisan Nasional (BN).

"I don't have any candidate and I don't expect that to happen," said the former prime minister when asked whether Najib should step down if BN fails to do well in the 13th general election.

He said theoretically, if Najib did not do well in the election, his position would indeed not be stable "but I have no candidates or anything like that".

He said this after delivering a keynote address on "Strength in Innovation: How to Stay Competitive in the Fast Developing World" during the World Conference on Global Innovation at the Putra World Trade Centre here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir agreed with the opinion of former finance minister Tun Daim Zainuddin that Najib should be fielding more new faces in the general election.

On former Pas life member Zainol Ismail wanting to meet Dr Mahathir to apologise for plotting to kill him in 1988, the former premier said he was at first shocked to learn about Zainol's admission.

He believed that Zainol, better known as CN Afghani, had been influenced by the "Amanat Haji Hadi", which labelled Umno members as infidels.

"But Alhamdulillah (All Praise to Allah), he has realised (his mistake) and is no longer fanatical over Pas' ideology, and has made a statement that he wants to apologise. I am prepared to forgive anyone."