

Two Umno MPs say they wanted Dr M to remain as PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Two Umno members of parliament yesterday revealed that they, along with Pas and Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS), wanted Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to stay on as prime minister during the February constitutional crisis.

Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim (Umno-Arau) said Dr Mahathir had insisted on resigning, leaving BN, Pas and GPS MPs with no choice but to nominate another name for the position.

"All of this happened because of you, Tun. It's because of Langkawi stepping down (in February) that now we need to replace the (Dewan Rakyat) speaker.

"Tun, we MPs from BN, Pas and GPS were asked to support you as prime minister, but you quit."

To this, Baling MP Datuk Seri Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim shouted: "You ran away!"

Shahidan continued: "When you quit, we were forced to nominate a new name for prime minister. You shouldn't have re-



Datuk Seri Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim

signed. You should've nominated another name, like Port Dickson (Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim), for example.

"But you quit instead. When you resigned, what other option did we have? We were forced to suggest Pagoh (Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin) to be prime minister."

He said this at the Dewan Rakyat when debating the motion to replace Speaker Tan Sri Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof with former Election Commission chairman Datuk Azhar Azizan Harun.

Dr Mahathir had rejected the motion, saying that the Perikatan Nasional government could not provide a valid answer on why Ariff needed to be replaced.

Shahidan argued that changes in government top posts naturally led to changes in other top posts.

"When there is a change (in prime minister), there will be other changes too, including what we're about to do."

Datuk Seri Bung Moktar Radin (Umno-Kinabatangan) echoed Shahidan's remarks, saying BN, Pas and GPS MPs had to accept Dr Mahathir's resignation although that was not their intention.