

**Dr M's 'weak government' prediction shows BN lacks confidence, says Pakatan Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Ida Lim**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 20 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) politicians suggested today that Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's prediction yesterday that Barisan Nasional (BN) would emerge from the next general election at the helm of a weak government reflected the ruling coalition's lack of confidence ahead of what is expected to be a tightly contested election expected soon.

PR leaders also latched on to Dr Mahathir's remarks that the BN government's propensity to resort to cash handouts to the public was close to vote-buying as a sign that the administration lacked long-term solutions and ideas for the country.

Saifuddin said Najib has no other ideas on how to help the people in the long term. Yesterday, Dr Mahathir had said that the practice of giving out cash handouts was "close to" vote-buying, but added that it was an easy decision to make when a government was running out of time and polls are near.

Datuk Saifuddin Nasution, PKR's secretary-general, said today that BN was normally "confident that they can easily form a government."

He said the cash handouts from the Najib administration were done "in the hope that the rakyat will give him (Najib) back the mandate."

"Whether it's vote-buying or similar to vote-buying, Mahathir indeed admitted that PM Najib has no confidence that rakyat will vote for BN."

Saifuddin described it as a "desperate move by Najib" and "he has no other idea to win back people's support", saying that the "easiest way is to spend more."

"He has no other ideas on how to help the people in the long term," Saifuddin claimed, pointing to the many issues such as the rising cost of living and affordable housing.

"It seems like Najib only has one idea... to give cash," he said.

Mahfuz said Dr Mahathir has honestly admitted that 'the current government is weak.' The government is expected to announce a second round of RM500 cash handouts to lower-income households when Budget 2013 is tabled next week, in a move that is seen as giving Najib and his BN pact's ratings a boost ahead of polls expected soon.

The first round of handouts under the Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia (BR1M) programme, which involved some five million families and cost taxpayers RM2.6 billion, saw Najib's approval ratings shoot up to 69 per cent, largely due to a surge of support from low-income households.

PAS vice-president Datuk Mahfuz Omar said that Dr Mahathir had honestly admitted that "the current government is so weak."

He said that the BN government was "not confident" that it could gain support with "policies and development that can really give benefits to the people", and has to resort to handing out cash.

"They are forced to buy votes by giving cash, hoping that the people will give their votes to them," Mahfuz said.

He said that Dr Mahathir had admitted that the government "doesn't understand what the people want", saying that Malaysians want "justice, transparency and accountability from the ruling government."

Liew said Dr Mahathir was 'not sure that BN will win. He's come to realise that it's 50-50.' Mahfuz also said that the former prime minister "admits that BN will not be able to take over the states from PR", referring to the four states now ruled by PR after the 2008 elections.

Liew Chin Tong, the DAP's international secretary, agreed with his PR colleagues, saying that Dr Mahathir was "not sure that BN will win. He's come to realise that it's 50-50."

"Mahathir has finally admitted what Najib doesn't want to admit, that it will be a very close fight.

"I think Najib should admit that there is an even chance for BN to lose power, and he should promise that he would see through the smooth transition of power in the event of a change of government."

He said the BN government's move to give out monetary aid to the people indicated a lack of plans for "sustainable growth".

"While the Najib administration campaigns on its track record as a government that has been there for 55 years, Mahathir was right to say that this administration has no long-term plan for the nation."

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