

**Najib breathes easier after Dr Mahathir pow-wow**  
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**By The Malaysian Insider**

It has been a roller-coaster ride for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak (pic left) since he led the Barisan Nasional to victory at the May 5 general election but without achieving his own benchmark: restoring its two-thirds control of Parliament.

There have been sessions to put out fires with disgruntled MPs; promises made to Umno politicians seeking appointments to boards of Government-linked companies and monitoring comments from influential voices such as Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (pic right) amid reports that Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah could be emerging as a threat of sorts.

In short, it has been a challenging time for the man at Sri Perdana.

But Monday was a good day for the PM.

Dr Mahathir met Najib and assured him that he believes that there should not be any contest for the top two positions in Umno in the party's year-end polls. Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad

This assurance came just three days after the former prime minister told a group of fund managers at a closed-door session in Kuala Lumpur last Friday that there should be a contest for the top positions in Umno.

There has never been a contest for the posts since the original Umno was declared illegal in 1988 and Dr Mahathir then formed Umno Baru.

Informed sources told The Malaysian Insider that Dr Mahathir believes that his comments to the fund managers were misunderstood.

But those present at the session at a hotel in Kuala Lumpur said that Dr Mahathir was clearly critical of the leadership and definitely felt that a contest would burnish Umno's democratic credentials as well as bolster Najib's standing in the party and public eye.

It is unclear what prompted Dr Mahathir to alter his position at this stage on electoral contests for the party's president and deputy president position.

Officially, he said that a contest could split Umno, adding that in Malaysia, there was a penchant for a loser not to accept the result of an election.

Despite Dr Mahathir's endorsement of no contest for the top two positions, whether Najib and Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yasin will win unchallenged will depend on the feedback at Umno divisional meetings and Putrajaya's success in handling two restive groups: Umno MPs who were not given Cabinet positions and Umno divisional chiefs not fielded as candidates in the general election.

Some 145,000 out of Umno's 3.5 million members will vote directly for all posts in the party elections this year, under new rules enforced to ensure corruption will not skew the results.

The party's Supreme Council had already agreed last month that there will be no contests

for the top two posts but several senior leaders have said contests for all posts would make Umno more democratic. – June 19, 2013.

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