

Absurd to say dad wants me to be PM, says Mukhriz
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Former Kedah menteri besar Mukhriz Mahathir has denied allegations that his father ex-premier Mahathir Mohamad's main motivation in campaigning for Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's ouster was to see him sit on the PM's chair.

"It's totally absurd and they (Najib and his supporters) should know him better than that, as he (Mahathir) was their boss for 22 years." he told the *South China Morning Post* in an interview yesterday.

Reiterating that he personally has no ambitions to become Malaysia's prime minister, Mukhriz emphatically denied the government's accusations.

Mukhriz, the fourth of Mahathir's seven children related how the ex-PM had publicly forbidden any member of his family to be involved in politics while in office.

"It was public knowledge when he (Mahathir) was president of the party and prime minister that he discouraged family members, particularly (my brother) Mokhzani (Mahathir) and myself, from playing an active role in politics and government to avoid accusations of nepotism," Mukhriz told the daily.

He denied that his involvement in politics after Mahathir stepped down has anything to do with his father's wishes.

"You would think that if he (Mahathir) had such ambitions for me, he could have easily done it while he was in power. Why wait 13 years after his retirement?" he asked.

Mukhriz related how he first stood for elections in 2004 for the post of Umno Youth chief in Kubang Pasu, Kedah, previously held by his father, and he promptly lost.

"My father told me I would lose and I did. It was a real wake-up call for me that nothing can be taken for granted. It was a baptism by fire," Mukhriz said.

Later that same year, Mukhriz won a seat in Umno Youth's executive council by securing the most votes, marking the rise of his political star in 2008 which continued when he won a parliamentary seat in Jerlun, Kedah, and he was made deputy minister for international trade and industry in 2009 by Najib.

"I actually don't have ambition to become Prime Minister because I think it's a tough job, especially now," Mukhriz said. "If there is a change in leadership, the new person will be inheriting a mess. I don't envy the next guy.

"I know what it's like. I know how tough it is. My father was (prime minister) for 22 years. It's the kind of job you have to throw in your all and everything into it," he said in the interview.

Asked about how his father's health is doing, faced with the mounting attacks from Najib and his loyalists, as well as the increased tempo of activities as he toured the nation calling for the PM's ouster, Mukhriz told the daily his dad was "fine".

"He is almost 91, but his health is fine," he said. "He is driven, he has a mission so this is not the time to give up halfway. He inspires much younger people to do something about our lot and not just leave it to people whom we longer trust," concluded the ex-MB.