

**'If I had cronies, I can take care of them myself' – Mahathir**

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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad today responded to one of his successor's accusations that he had pressured the government to take care of his cronies.

Responding to ex-prime minister Najib Abdul Razak, Mahathir said the people he sought help for were capable people and not cronies.

"If I had cronies, I could take care of them myself but I don't have cronies. What I have are capable people.

"If they are incapable, you give them RM1 million, that RM1 million will disappear.

"If they have shown their ability and we help them, then they will succeed," the Pejuang chairperson told a press conference in Putrajaya after launching his party's manifesto for the upcoming Johor polls.

Mahathir questioned if any of them were his family members.

"Are they my family members, children, or grandchildren? Even if they asked they won't get it.

"As you know, I did not allow my children to join politics (until I retired). My grandchildren were also not in politics. There was no nepotism when I governed," he said.

Yesterday, Najib accused Mahathir of being upset at him for refusing to support his son Mukhriz Mahathir in the Umno polls.

He also alleged that Mahathir had wanted the government to provide a grant to carmaker Proton.

Mahathir also disputed claims alleging that his children are billionaires.

"I want to see the documentary proof that my children have billions as claimed by Najib. These are just false allegations by Najib.

"This is not something unusual as he lies, he can make money disappear then say it's okay to steal," he said.

Zahid wanted cases dropped

Mahathir also responded to the ongoing war of words between ex-prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin and Umno president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Muhyiddin had alleged that Zahid had gone to his house with piles of files to convince the then prime minister to drop his corruption cases, something that Zahid denies.

Mahathir said Zahid too had tried to get in his good books just before he became prime minister.

"Zahid came to my house with two to three people and tried to get in my good books because at the time there was a possibility that I may become prime minister.

"But I know about the things that Zahid had done which could land him in prison," he said.

Mahathir added that after Umno returned to power, he had also heard about Zahid's lobbying to drop his criminal cases.

"He wanted the investigations to be stopped, that is true," he said.

Zahid is facing 47 counts of money laundering, criminal breach of trust and bribery over tens of millions of ringgit belonging to Yayasan Akalbudi, a charitable organisation he founded.

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