

## **Dr M: M'sian Indians are not 'completely loyal' to the country**

**Malaysiakini**

**13 January 2024**

Malaysian Indians are not completely loyal to the country as they still identify with their country of origin, claimed former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Speaking in an exclusive online interview with Indian satellite TV channel Thanthi TV, Mahathir said one should identify as Malay to have the right to call the country their own.

"Malaysian Indians do not speak Malay as their home language, they speak Tamil (instead)," he said when the host asked whether one can't remain loyal to the country while committed to their roots.

The nonagenarian then said that his "problem" is when "immigrants" (Indians and Chinese) call the country their own while professing their own cultures and customs.

When the host asked whether Mahathir expects the non-Malays to "totally assimilate" to become Malays, the latter replied in the affirmative.

"Yes... they should become. In the past, we have people of Indian, Pakistani, Arab,

and African origin, who are now Malays.

"In the sense that they speak the Malay language at home, their culture is Malay."

To this, the host asked whether Mahathir expects people of all races to identify as Malays, rather than Malaysians, Mahathir said that "it should be so."

Mahathir claimed that it is the case in any country, where people who want to say they belong to a particular country, are expected to identify as the indigenous community.

When the host pointed out that some may argue that the Orang Asli have more rights as "sons of the soil", Mahathir said his view differed from the host's.

### **'I'm 100 percent Malay'**

The interview then moved on to Mahathir's Indian roots, which the veteran politician completely denied knowledge of.

"No, I'm not an Indian. I'm a Malay because I do not know the Indian language, and that was a long, long time ago," he said.

When asked whether he expects all Malaysians to follow the same, Mahathir

replied: "Yes, if they want to claim the country as their own, they must identify themselves completely with this country."

He further denied any knowledge about his Indian (particularly Kerala) roots, stressing that he is "100 percent Malay."

"I'm now 100 percent a Malay, I speak Malay and practice Malay customs and traditions," he insisted.

Mahathir was then asked what he thought about the contribution of the non-Malays to nation-building and the country's economy, to which he replied: "They have been 'fairly compensated' for it."

He said Malaysia was "liberal" enough to have people who don't fully identify as Malay to be ministers, in a reference to BN - which he once led - working with Chinese and Indian component parties MCA and MIC.

Mahathir then trained his guns on Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's administration, which he claimed was riddled with problems.

When the host asked why Mahathir had issues with each of his successors, the latter claimed this was because "they did wrong things", including "stealing money".

**Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd**

Source: <https://www.malysiakini.com/news/693043>