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Airline needs to undergo radical revamp from top to bottom

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Under private hands, the airline could attract new people and fresh ideas, says former prime minister

by P PREM KUMAR

MALAYSIAN Airline System Bhd (MAS) should be privatised to Malaysians who have experience in the aviation business and who can work with the national carrier's powerful unions, says former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Mahathir said of all the options open to bring the airline back into profitability, privatisation would offer the best chance at the current crisis point because the airline needs to undergo a radical restructuring from top to bottom.

Wading in on the intense speculation on the fate of the national carrier, Dr Mahathir also said the airline's major shareholder, Khazanah Nasional Bhd, should also exit MAS upon privatisation because it could not invest the proper time and energy to focus on the airline.

"Khazanah may hold some shares but I don't think it is necessary. They



Bloomberg

Dr Mahathir says Khazanah should also exit MAS upon privatisation because it could not invest the proper time and energy to focus on the airline

are having too many companies in its stable, thus the focus cannot be 100% on MAS.

"MAS requires very intensive examination to look into where the holes are and how to correct them," Dr Mahathir, a former Khazanah chairman, said in an interview with *The Malaysian Reserve*.

He said under private hands, the

airline could attract new people and fresh ideas, and that even the hardline Malaysia Airline System Employees Union (Maseu) had told him that they would agree to such a proposal.

"I have met with the union. They said to me that they are quite willing to be privatised. They are not against privatisation because they

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