

Newspaper	THE STAR
Date	15 MARCH 2017

# Dr M-Nazri debate set to be a knockout

After 10 years in the making, former premier and minister to finally lock horns

*The Star - 18/3/2017*

By **RAZAK AHMAD**  
razak@thestar.com.my

**PETALING JAYA:** The March 25 debate between Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz is a showdown about 10 years in the making.

They have a history of bad blood stretching back to 2006 when Nazri, who was then Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, first challenged Dr Mahathir to a debate for attacking his successor, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

In 11 days from now, they will finally get their chance to lock horns on topics that will reportedly include

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Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad

1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) and the Bumiputra Malaysia Finance (BMF) scandal in 1983.

The debate, organised by *Sinar Harian*, will take place at 3pm at Dewan Milenium in Nazri's parliamentary constituency of Padang Rengas in Perak.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir "thanked" Nazri for accepting his invitation, adding that he was in fact open to "any debate with anyone".

"This is considered confirmed. "Well, our side is confirmed. I don't know about theirs," said the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia chairman.

On Monday, Nazri, who is the Tourism and Culture Minister, said he was looking forward to the debate. Last Friday, Dr Mahathir challenged Nazri to a debate on issues such as 1MDB and BMF after Nazri dared him to stand in his constituency for the general election.

Debate moderator Dr Maszlee

Malik said there should be surprises in store.

"Judging from whatever that has been said by the two since last week, there is already tacit agreement on the topics to be debated.

"As for the format, I believe in free, but serious and hard talk. It will be a professional political dialogue, rather than any form of normal debate," said the International Islamic University Malaysia lecturer.

In 2006, Nazri reminded Dr Mahathir of his promise not to interfere in the country's administration after his retirement.

It followed Dr Mahathir's questioning of a government decision to

cancel the crooked bridge project to replace the Johor Causeway.

On June 26 that same year, Nazri declared an "open war" on Dr Mahathir, calling on him to leave Umno because he had colluded with the Opposition and continued to criticise the Government.

Dr Mahathir then responded with the remark that Nazri was a "hatchet man among henchmen".

Over the years, the two have occasionally traded barbs. Nazri upped his criticisms when Dr Mahathir slammed the Government over the 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) payments and for allowing investments from China.