

Newspaper	NEW STRAITS TIMES
Date	9/12/2018

PTPTN SALARY DEDUCTION SCHEME

# U-TURNS NEEDED, SAYS DR M

NSF- 9/12/2018 pg. 6

It is necessary for govt to turn around when it realises it is going the wrong way, says PM

MANIRAJAN RAMASAMY
   
 PETALING JAYA
   
 cnews@nstp.com.my

**P**RIME Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has brushed aside criticism that his government is a "U-turn" government.

Sometimes, he said, it was necessary for the government to turn around when it realised that it was going the wrong way.

He was commenting on the postponement of the implementation of the new repayment scheme for National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) borrowers.

"But only if necessary... we are not perfect people, although most of us are angels," he quipped after chairing the Pakatan Harapan Presidential Council meeting here yesterday.

"But even angels make mistakes. So when angels make mistakes, they turn around too."

He said the scheme was postponed because of protests.

"Many are not satisfied. We have a population of 33 million. So it is a bit difficult when people react in a negative manner. We take into consideration the opinions of the people. We will modify it and make an announcement later."

Dr Mahathir denied rumours of a cabinet reshuffle.

In a Facebook post on Friday,



Pakatan Harapan chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad speaking at a press conference after chairing a PH Presidential Council meeting in Petaling Jaya yesterday. He is flanked by PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and PKR advisory council chairman Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail. PIC BY SYARAFIQ ABD SAMAD

Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik said: "The mechanism for the new PTPTN repayment scheme will be postponed, taking into consideration the need to hold discussions with stakeholders to hear their views and recommendations."

On Wednesday, PTPTN had announced that scheduled salary deductions would begin next month for borrowers earning RM2,000 or more monthly.

On another matter, Dr Mahathir said the government would not pursue or enact an anti-party hopping law, saying it was the democratic right of elected representatives to switch parties.

"We are a democratic government. We believe in democracy, and democracy allows even frogs to jump," he said when asked whether Pakatan Harapan would push for a law to prevent politicians from switching camps.

"Frog", or "political frog", describes the act of a politician hopping from one party to another.

Since the 14th General Election

in May, several elected representatives have left Umno for Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM), which Dr Mahathir chairs.

They include Jeli member of parliament Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed and Bagan Serai MP Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali.

On Friday, Bernama reported that Guar Chempedak assemblyman Datuk Dr Ku Abdul Rahman Ku Ismail, who left Umno to become an independent last month, had joined PPBM.

In Johor, Sedili assemblyman Rasman Ithnain and Johor Lama assemblyman Roslaili Johari joined PPBM on Nov 19, while Endau assemblyman Alwiyah Talib joined in May. All three were previously in Umno.

In May, five Barisan Nasional elected representatives in Sabah defected to Parti Warisan Sabah, granting its president, Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal, the majority to form the state government.

Many have long criticised the practice of party hopping, calling it a betrayal of the people's trust.

On a separate matter, Dr Mahathir said yesterday's PH charity dinner to raise funds for component parties should not be misinterpreted as a form of corruption.

"We are selling tables for the dinner to raise money for our parties. It should not be seen as corruption."

He said the coalition would not only announce the amount raised, but also the donors and the amount they contributed.

He said the PH Presidential Council meeting discussed the concerns of civil servants who might lose their jobs following the government's decisions to shut several government agencies.

He said some of these agencies were misused by the previous government and political parties.

"Some agencies were funded by different sources, and it was not money given by the government."

He said the government was collecting data from affected civil servants to find a solution to their loss of income.