

PM denies rejecting UEC recognition

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KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad denied that he rejected the recognition of the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) due to the sensitivity of the Malays.

"I never said I rejected. I merely said there are sensitivities among the Malays on this issue.

"We take into account the sensitivities of all races, including the Chinese, Indians, orang asli and all ethnic groups.

"If we are not sensitive, then we would not have gotten the support from the people or won (the general election)," he told a press conference after chairing the Pakatan Harapan presidential council meeting yesterday.

The Prime Minister said this in response to questions on UEC during a recent interview with *Sin Chew Daily* on the matter.

According to the daily, it quoted Dr Mahathir as saying that the government needed to address the unequal wealth distribution between ethnic groups before recog-

nising the UEC.

Dr Mahathir clarified that when he spoke on the sensitivities of the Malays, it did not mean that he sidelined the sensitivities of other races.

"I would like to remind everyone that we must take into account the views of all, not just one ethnic group," he said.

He said that while he does not reject interview requests, the media should be fair and accurate in their reporting.

"I hope the press will report the truth. Although we tried to abolish the Anti-Fake News law, the attempt failed as we did not get the support from Opposition senators," said Dr Mahathir.

Separately, Dong Jiao Zong (United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia and the United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaysia) said the UEC was an educational issue and not political.

"Dong Jiao Zong would like to reaffirm that

education should not be mingled with politics.

"From a purely academic perspective, a pragmatic, professional and rational approach to the UEC recognition can help Malaysia cultivate and retain more talents," it said in a statement.

Dong Jiao Zong also reminded the Pakatan government that the UEC recognition was a promise made by them prior to the May 9 polls.

"We hope that with Pakatan taking over the government, new thinking and governance should be instilled, and promises credited, including the UEC recognition," it said.

Dong Jiao Zong said since the Education Ministry has set up a committee to collect and study the opinions about the UEC recognition, all concerned parties and stakeholders could submit their views.

The UEC is a standardised examination conducted in the country's 60 Chinese independent secondary schools.