

'PH'S DWINDLING SUPPORT, NOT AN ISSUE'

All out war on graft will still continue to ensure country progresses, vows Dr Mahathir

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PAKATAN Harapan chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is not bothered by waning support for the coalition.

Instead, Dr Mahathir vowed, in his capacity as prime minister, to pull out all the stops in the fight against corruption to ensure Malaysia could progress to greater heights and earn the respect of the world.

"The support towards PH may have declined, including support for me, but I will still go ahead with efforts to clean this nation of corruption. If corruption is left unchecked, a nation cannot be developed, cost (of doing things) will be higher and tasks cannot be executed well," he said during a get-together session with government officers.

Present was Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Seri Dr Ismail Bakar.

Dr Mahathir warned that corruption could destroy a nation.

He said he knew that some people in the civil service felt the pinch when they no longer earned "extra income" under the current government due to relentless efforts to combat corruption.

"Thus, they feel disappointed and feel that a kleptocratic gov-



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad arriving for a get together with government officers in Putrajaya yesterday. PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

ernment is better than a democratic government."

He said he understood that it would be hard for some government officers to shift their loyalty to the "enemies" of the past government.

"The same people who have belittled them (civil servants) before, when they were the opposition, are now in the government. Now, the civil servants are asked to give their loyalty to them. Of course this has caused problems.

"Some civil servants believe that the new government will not

last for more than one term, and the previous government, which has led the country for 61 years, will make a comeback. This will definitely throw a wrench in ensuring a smoother administration process for the country."

Dr Mahathir told government officers that he was no stranger to them and had worked with some of them when he was prime minister under Barisan Nasional.

"I am still the same and not the enemy of the government machinery. We have worked well before until we reached the status of an Asian Tiger. Now the same

people are leading the country, with some new faces."

When asked again if he was worried by PH's dwindling popularity, Dr Mahathir said: "No, I am not worried."

He said as part of the government, he expected to be criticised and believed that low popularity would not have much impact on PH in the 15th General Election (GE15) because the people would take into consideration what the government was doing.

"It is still a long way to GE15."

Dr Mahathir was referring to a recent poll by Merdeka Centre re-

vealing that the PH government's approval rating had declined to 39 per cent as at March 11, a massive drop from the 79 per cent polled on May 31 last year.

The survey involving 1,204 voters nationwide was conducted between March 5 and 11.

It also showed that only 34 per cent of respondents believed the country was headed in the right direction, compared with 55 per cent in August last year.

The study also found that only 46 per cent of those surveyed were satisfied with Dr Mahathir's leadership as prime minister.