

Dr M: So what if we are not popular?

PM not worried about criticism against Pakatan, vows to clean up nation

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PUTRAJAYA: Criticism and lower popularity is only to be expected when Pakatan Harapan went from being the opposition to the government, said the Prime Minister.

Unfazed by the drop in approval ratings for himself and the coalition in a survey by Merdeka Centre, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad instead vowed to see the government carry out its plans for the country and the people.

"When you are doing something, of course it is open to criticism... we are aware of that.

"When you are in the opposition, all you do is criticise (the government). You (on the other hand) do nothing so there is nothing to be criticised," he said when asked about the latest findings by the opinion research outfit.

Dr Mahathir, however, pointed out that despite the survey results, the election outcome could be different.

"People will make proper assessments as to who is fit to govern," he said.

Asked if he was worried about the dip in popularity for him and the ruling coalition, Dr Mahathir replied:

"No, I am not."

On whether the Merdeka results would be a bellwether for the 15th General Election, the Prime Minister said it was still far ahead.

"For now, we will do lots of things (for the people), but at this moment, we are constrained by the wrongdoings of the previous administration," he added.

The survey results released last week found that the approval rating for Dr Mahathir as Prime Minister had fallen to 46% from a high of 71% in August last year.

As for the Pakatan government, its rating fell from 79% to 39% in the same period.

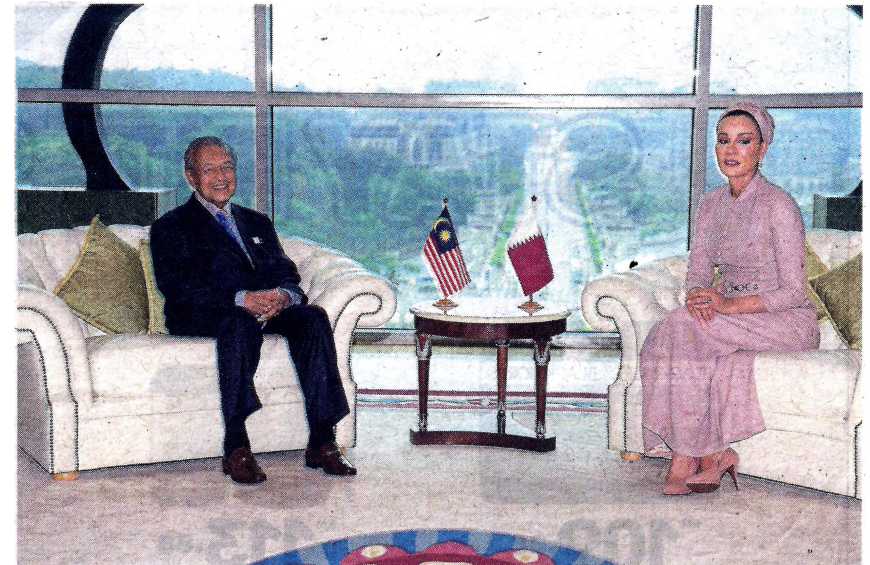
A total of 1,204 registered voters were polled from March 5 to 11.

In his address at a gathering with civil servants, Dr Mahathir also acknowledged that he and his government had become less popular.

He said that among civil servants, the government's anti-graft fight resulted in them losing "extra income"?

"Some are disappointed because of our strong stand against corruption. It is as if a kleptocratic government is better than a democratic government.

"We find that support for us and myself has fallen but we will continue to clean up the country against corruption," he said.



Meeting of minds: Dr Mahathir receiving a courtesy call from the Chairperson of the Qatar Foundation For Education, Science and Community Development Sheikha Moza Nasser at his office in Perdana Putra in Putrajaya. — Bernama