

# DR M: WE'LL SPEAK OUT ON KASHMIR

PM says Malaysia will not retract or change what he said at UN General Assembly

KUALA LUMPUR

**M**ALAYSIA will continue to speak out on Jammu and Kashmir to ensure all parties

abide by the United Nations (UN) resolution to resolve the conflict, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Dr Mahathir said he would not retract his statement made at the 74th UN General Assembly in New York last month.

"We will speak our minds. We will not retract or change what we've said. We felt that the people of Kashmir had benefited from the UN resolution, and all countries should abide by it, not just India or Pakistan, but even the United States. "Otherwise, what's the use of having the UN?" he said at the Parliament lobby here yesterday. Dr Mahathir, at the UN General Assembly, had spoken about the need to resolve the Jammu and



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad responding to questions at the Dewan Rakyat in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. PIC BY MUHD ZAABA ZAKERIA



Kashmir conflict, urging for problems to be resolved peacefully. He had said that despite the UN resolution, Kashmir had been invaded and occupied. "There may be reasons for this action, but it is wrong. The problem must be resolved by peaceful means. India should work with Pakistan to resolve this problem. Ignoring the UN would lead to other forms of disregard for the UN and the rule of law."

His remarks caused a backlash, and a #BoycottMalaysia campaign by India was started on social media. On Monday, India's top vegetable oil trade body, Solvent Extractors' Association of India, asked its members to stop buying palm oil from Malaysia, as "punishment" for criticising India on its Kashmir policy. Following this, Dr Mahathir said the government would study the impact of the boycott.

"We'll study the effect of their boycott, but the Indian government has not said anything. "So we'll see what their policy is going to be like." Dr Mahathir had said Malaysia was a trading nation and needed to be nice to people, adding that it was important to speak out. "Sometimes what we say is liked by some and disliked by others," he said, adding that he would not report India to the World Trade Organisation.

He also said the government was working on lifting the travel ban to North Korea. "We are working on establishing diplomatic relations with them." On Sept 28, 2017, Wisma Putra said Malaysians were banned from travelling to North Korea, citing "security issues". This followed the murder of Kim Jong-Nam, the estranged half brother to North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-Un.