

Dr M: Now is not the time

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Election would be costly and not feasible in current climate

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PUTRAJAYA: Now is not the right time to hold a general election because the Covid-19 situation has made it tough, as election will mean crowds, says former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He also said that elections were costly and that the government needed money.

"If attention is diverted to running elections, some people are going to suffer," he said at a press conference yesterday.

When pressed on how Pakatan Harapan would fare if elections were held, Dr Mahathir said he didn't know and that it would depend on the people.

Dr Mahathir also said he was unsure if he had the numbers in Parliament to regain the power from the Perikatan Nasional government.

He claimed Pakatan had 114 MPs of 222 in Dewan Rakyat when Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin was sworn in as Prime Minister on March 1.

"Well, numbers keep on appearing and disappearing. We don't know. What we do know is at the time Muhyiddin was sworn in he did not have the majority," he said.

He said his supporters were called up and offered positions, with many succumbing to these offers.



Ready to serve:
Dr Mahathir says if he is called to serve, he is available.

He said they were given jobs or posts that would reward them substantially.

"After Pakatan Harapan cleaned up a lot of government institutions and companies, professionals were in charge but they were sacked and replaced by politicians," Dr Mahathir said, in reference to government-linked companies.

Asked about his relationship with PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar

Ibrahim, he replied he had no problem with the latter.

"Maybe he has problems with me. That I don't know. You will have to ask him," he said.

Asked whether he would offer himself to be Prime Minister for the third time, Dr Mahathir said that he was not offering himself for the position.

"I look at it as duty to my country, not duty to myself. I don't care

about the money that you get. I think we are overpaid as ministers. I was paid RM20,000. I never spent even one sen," he said, adding that everything was given by the government.

"I am not interested in my personal well-being. But if I can be of service, or people think I can be of service, I am available. Not for long. I'm already 94 years old, how many more months do I have?" he said.