

'We'll focus on Malay issues'

The star - 4/9/2020 B-12

Dr M: Pejuang aims to help solve problems faced by community

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PUTRAJAYA: Saying that it aims to win at least 36 seats in the next general election, Parti Pejuang Tanah Air will remain a race-based party to help address problems faced by the Malay community.

Its chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said while the party did not intend to sideline the other races, specific policies such as the New Economic Policy (NEP), which was drafted to help the Malay community, had not been fully effective.

"For us, the Malays have a lot of problems compared to the other races. And the common solution which can be applied to all other races may not be effective for the Malays.

"We want to focus on the Malays as it is important and that is why this party is a Malay-based one," he told a press conference at the Perdana Leadership Foundation yesterday.

Also present was his son Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir, who is Jerlun MP and Pejuang president.

Pejuang, said the former prime minister, had no intention of sidelining the other races as Malaysia is a multiracial country.

"We are not fighting the non-Malays. We are just focusing on problems faced by the Malays. We want to come up with solutions to



Meeting with the press: Mahathir speaking during the news conference in Putrajaya. — Reuters

their problems which can only be corrected by the Malays," said Dr Mahathir.

The party, he added, aimed to win at least 36 parliamentary seats in the 15th General Election to become the "decision-maker" for the political coalition that would form the Federal Government.

"We do not think that any of the two political coalitions can win. If we can just get 36 seats, we would be in a position to join any political alliance that meets our condition.

"(It's) not to form the government

by ourselves, but we are going to be the ones who determine who should be the government," he said.

Dr Mahathir also cast doubt on the new youth-centric political party to be formed by Muar MP Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman.

"I really do not know why he wants to form a new party. But I do not think it will be successful.

"Although the youth represent a very big portion of the electorate, it is not enough for the party to win," said the Langkawi MP.

"In any constituency, there are

the old and the young among the electorate."

Syed Saddiq, who is the former Youth and Sports Minister, had said that the party – yet to be named or formed – would be modelled after France's En Marche and the now-defunct Future Forward Party of Thailand.

The new group, he added, would comprise young technocrats, professionals and politicians who would ensure "youth's voice dominate in Parliament and outside of Parliament".

Dr Mahathir said a political party needed to appeal broadly to all ages.

"We are going to appeal to the young as well. Hence, it is difficult for him to succeed.

"Having said that, we are a free country and he can do things on his own," he said, adding that Pejuang had "good relations" with Syed Saddiq.

"We have no problems if the objective is all about fighting corruption," said Dr Mahathir.

In an immediate reaction, political analyst Prof Dr Sivamurugan Pandian said political parties should focus instead on a people-centric approach and move beyond racial politics to address any issue.

"If it is not successful, they should look at the root of the problem and find remedies formulated to reach targeted groups," he said.