

# 'Pua was arrogant and disliked'

The Star - 8/12/2021 p5.13

## Dr M blames former political aide for meddling in government matters

By MARTIN CARVALHO and AHMAD SYARAFI ADLI AZAMI  
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**PETALING JAYA:** Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad did not mince his words when he described Tony Pua as "arrogant and disliked" by the business community when he was political secretary to then finance minister Lim Guan Eng.

"When you are not even a minister but just a political secretary, yet go around telling people what to do and threatening them and speaking the way you speak, you are arrogant and people will dislike you.

"Because of this person, a lot of people were against the (Pakatan Harapan) government as they felt that the government was not sym-

pathetic to their cause," Dr Mahathir said at the virtual launching of his book titled *Capturing Hope: The Struggle Continues For A New Malaysia* yesterday.

The former prime minister was commenting on Lim's claim that he had a "faulty memory" and it was unfair to pin the blame on Pua based on excerpts from his book.

Pua, although not named directly by Dr Mahathir in his book, denied that he had threatened the developer of the Exchange 106 skyscraper at the Tun Razak Exchange (TRX) when serving as Lim's aide, saying he was singled out because of his efforts to tackle issues left behind by the previous administration of Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

It was said that Dr Mahathir was

furiously when informed by the owner of TRX's developer Mulia Property Development Sdn Bhd, Djoko Tjanda, that Pua "threatened" to take over Mulia's 49% share for only RM1 after Mulia invested more than RM1.1bil in the project.

Pua, the Damansara MP, said Lim had defended his role and had written several times to explain the issues to Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir said that he only cited the TRX project as an example of Pua's behaviour, although many other businessmen complained about him.

He said instead of performing his duties as political secretary to Lim, Pua began meddling in the government administration, including in

policy matters.

"Others also came to tell me that this man - the adviser to the finance minister - was very arrogant. If I were to cite them all, it would fill the pages of an entire book," Dr Mahathir said.

He acknowledged that the appointment of political secretaries for ministers began during his tenure.

"Many ministers complained that due to their ministerial work, they did not have time to run their political on-the-ground tasks.

"This was why the political secretary role was introduced - to observe and gauge a minister's popularity among the public.

"Instead, this political secretary ordered that he was to be briefed on

policies, called in officers for meetings and implemented government policies," he claimed.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir said he decided to pen his experience on the GE14 in 2018 and his subsequent appointment as prime minister and also the collapse of the Pakatan administration following the Sheraton Move.

He said his latest book was not as lengthy as his previous memoir, *A Doctor In The House*, and represented his experiences following his appointment as a prime minister again in 2018.

The book, he said, also included events leading to his resignation after which he became an opposition MP and subsequently founded Parti Pejuang Tanah Air in 2020.