

WILL LEND SUPPORT TO PEJUANG

# DR M RELUCTANT TO CONTEST GE15

**He also refutes claims that he practised favouritism during his tenure as PM**

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**F**ORMER prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has hinted that he might not contest the upcoming 15th General Election (GE15).

Dr Mahathir, however, said he would continue to provide strong support to his Parti Pejuang Tanah Air (Pejuang) political party.

"I will be 97 or 98, in the next election. I know I am old. I am a bit lucky as I have not lost the ability to interact, argue and lead the party.

"My party wants me to contest, but I do not think I should," he said in an interview with CITY-Plus FM yesterday.

He also defended the formation of his new party, stressing that there should be a Malay-based political party that can go head-to-head against traditional powerhouse Umno.

This, he said, worked in the previous GE, when Umno splinter party Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia managed to garner support from the Malay community and win the election together with Pakatan Harapan.

Dr Mahathir said the main objective in the next election was not to destroy Malay dominance, but to "change from a corrupt to a clean government".

On a possible political coalition in the next GE, he said they should be taking people's sentiments into consideration when choosing their ally.

Dr Mahathir suggested that Pejuang would not form any cooperation with Umno.

"We promise to provide good governance. All Pejuang members and candidates will take an oath not to be influenced by money or be involved in corruption," he added.

Dr Mahathir also refuted claims that he was an 'ultra-Malay' or preferred giving government contracts to Chinese tycoon cronies during his 22-year tenure as prime minister.

He stressed that contracts were offered to individuals based on their track records and no favouritism was practised.

He cited the instance of businessman Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Albukhary, who was linked to various projects under his administration.

He said Syed Mokhtar had the capability to deliver difficult projects with sufficient expertise.

"I did not know Syed Mokhtar before he was doing business in Johor.

"When they made a proposal to build a RM4 billion port, I studied it. I thought it was impossible (for



*In an interview with a radio station, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has hinted that he may not contest the upcoming 15th General Election. BERNAMA PIC*

him). But he has managed ports before, for example, the Pasir Gudang Port.

"So we took the risk on him and he was able to deliver. Other opportunities seem to go to him because he can deliver," he said.

Dr Mahathir said projects were also given to other Malay contractors, but they failed.

"When they fail, they are not regarded as my cronies, but when they succeed, they are my cronies.

"This was the problem I faced," he added.

He said a number of Chinese contractors had also benefited from government projects during his time.

Without disclosing any particular names, he said that they did secure some government projects while in other situations, they also benefited by being the suppliers of the Malay contractors who were implementing the projects.

"It is based on abilities. Can you do it? If you cannot then it is pointless as you are going to fail," he said.