

Politics not for the faint-hearted, says Dr M

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PETALING JAYA: You should rule out politics as a career if you have a soft heart, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (pic).

The former prime minister said if one wanted to be a politician, one must have a strong heart when criticised, slandered, vilified, and hated.

Speaking in an interview with Astro Awani on Sunday to mark his 97th birthday, Dr Mahathir also said that those who wanted

to be politicians must be ready to tweak their ideas and be open to changing their minds according to the situation.

"After joining politics, I found that not every idea will get 100% support because there will be people who will not agree with what we do.

"For example, most people wanted a Penang bridge but there were also those who rejected the idea, saying the tolls would be expensive.



"I listened and accepted their views.

"But, at the same time, I thought having a bridge was good for connectivity between the island and the mainland, so I went ahead and some of those who had not supported it agreed with me in the end.

"As such, we should be ready to be criticised as politicians," he added.

Saying he was immune to all types of criticism, slander and accusations by political enemies, the veteran with more than five decades as a career politician added that he was thankful he never regarded it as a burden.

Dr Mahathir said that was why he has always told those who claimed that he was wealthy to bring proof that he purportedly accumulated riches beyond imagination when he was prime minister, an accusation

he said was without basis.

"It seems I am a billionaire with billions of ringgit in Switzerland and Taiwan. What proof do they have?

"I do not have such money as I lead a moderate life, not in a house like a palace, but people still say I am rich. I don't have money, only my pension," he said as he vehemently denied the accusations.

He said he found joy in the realisation of his projects such as the Kuala Lumpur International Airport, the Petronas Twin Towers and the Penang Bridge.

"These are the things that make me happy, as we feel satisfied when what we planned becomes reality.

"We know what was then and now, as I lived in the 1980s, and know how Malaysia was - poor, with no basic amenities, no bridges to cross rivers," Dr Mahathir said and added that today, the people have highways from Bukit Kayu Hitam to Johor, which is a success story.

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"Roads were narrow that if one was to travel from Penang to Alor Setar, it would take two hours, but today there are straight roads which cut down the time.

"As such, I realise the development that began in a different generation - when the new generation came into being, all the amenities and facilities were there for them to benefit from."