

'I don't have money to fund political party'

KUBANG PASU: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad denied allegations that he offered funding to Pas to accept his son, Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir, as a candidate under the Perikatan Nasional (PN) banner in the state elections.

He said such a claim was baseless as he was not wealthy enough to fund any political party.

"I don't have any money. The only person who says I have money is (prime minister Datuk Seri) Anwar (Ibrahim).

"That's why I told him, if he

could find RM1 billion (owned by me), I would give half of that to him," he said after attending a Hari Raya Aidilfitri open house at Kampung Naga here on Thursday.

On May 6, Anwar challenged former leaders who allegedly amassed wealth during their tenures leading the country to surrender half of what they had gained to the Malays if they were truly sincere in helping the community.

Anwar accused past leaders such as Dr Mahathir and former

finance minister Tun Daim Zainuddin of enriching themselves and their relatives, and failed to help the Malays. He hoped the message would be relayed to them.

In response to Anwar's challenge, Dr Mahathir said Anwar should declare his assets and disclose his wealth to the public.

He also stressed that Anwar would have to answer for all of his claims against him in court.

"Why should he challenge Malay leaders? He is also a Malay leader, he should declare his assets as well. He should set an example.

"He must answer for making such allegations, claiming that I have a billion (ringgit) and Mukhriz has billions, and that I have jet planes and such. We have taken this to court and he said he will answer, so be it."

On May 5, Dr Mahathir filed a RM150 million defamation suit against Anwar at the Shah Alam High Court, with the current prime minister named as the sole defendant.

The suit cited Anwar's speech at a PKR special congress in which he accused Dr Mahathir of being racist and enriching him-

self and his family members during his 22-year tenure as prime minister.

Meanwhile, Mukhriz said Parti Pejuang Tanah Air, of which he is president, was open to working with any Malay-based party in the state elections except for Umno.

The Jitra assemblyman said Pejuang would only consider cooperating with "ethical" Malay parties, stressing that Umno was corrupt.

"We will wait and see, whether it is too late or even too early, we will wait. We are in the process of making a decision (on the state election pact).

"The party leadership has been discussing this (matter).

"I cannot disclose any details, we are open to discussions with any party so long as our allies are on the same page as us in the Malay struggle.

"We also understand that there are some parties we can never join forces with and there are also Malay parties that are kleptocratic, that's also a no for us."

Pejuang earlier applied to join PN, but it was turned down by the coalition, which comprises Pas, Bersatu and Gerakan.