

Grilled on podcast, Dr M delivers trademark straight talk

PETALING JAYA: Machiavellian. Opportunist. Iconoclast. Anti-semite. Grand statesman. Headache for almost every prime minister after him.

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad accepted all these labels that were thrown at him during his interview on the podcast *Keluar Sekejap* that aired yesterday.

And with his trademark bluntness, the 98-year-old former prime minister - the only one having served twice in the post - appeared not to care what others said of him.

In the nearly two-and-a-half-hour interview, Dr Mahathir sat down with hosts Khairy Jamaluddin and Shahril Hamdan to talk about economics, politics and why he still thinks Jews rule the world. Here are some of the most headline-making exchanges during the interview:

1. Dr Mahathir says that Malays have not created a successful commercial class because cultur-

ally, they just want to earn enough to "feed their family and go for the haj".

Khairy then challenges this view by saying: There is a new generation of Malay entrepreneurs. If you say that when you were growing up, the Malays only owned "one and half shops" in Alor Star, but today, there are so many and they are growing.

So how can you say that this is in their culture? Is this fair? That there is something in their DNA that makes them unsuccessful in business forever?

Dr Mahathir: The exception does not prove the rule. There are only a few Malays that are successful, not most of them.

We see other communities, almost all of them are successful to the point that their communities are ahead of the Malays.

There are some Malays who took the opportunities available to them and are successful, but their numbers are small.

2. Shahril: In one of your answers, you said that Malays are going to lose their own country.

Tun, do you not see that for non-Malays, this is like saying that Malaysia is not their country?

Dr Mahathir: The Malays settled in the peninsula and it became known as Tanah Melayu (Land of the Malays).

Migrants came and also became Malays such as Arabs, Pakistanis and Indians, they were absorbed and accepted Malay culture and customs.

But when there were others who came, but who wanted to preserve their identities and their ties to their original land, and even change the name of the country to one that does not belong to Malays, but a multi-ethnic country, it means we have lost our country.

3. Shahril: What Tun has said about Israel, a lot of people would agree. But do you not agree that this is an issue about Israel. There

are Jews all over the world that do not support what Israel does. Don't you think that your use of certain terms will divert attention from the point you are making and cast you as an anti-semite?

Dr Mahathir: There are Jews that don't support Israel. But the reality is that most Jews, especially in the US, support Israel and the actions of the US (who support Israel).

So if we want to pay attention to a small minority, but we don't criticise the bigger majority that are committing these crimes, it means we are allowing the crimes that are being committed by the majority because there is a small group that is opposed to these crimes. That cannot be accepted.

What Israel does is extraordinary. There has not been a situation where one community says publicly that they want to exterminate another community and the world does nothing about it.