

# Dr M's remarks against Indian community roundly slammed

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**PETALING JAYA:** Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's remarks about Malaysian-Indians "not being completely loyal" to the country has led to other politicians decrying what they say was a divisive comment from the former prime minister.

National Unity Minister Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang said he was disappointed with Dr Mahathir's remarks, adding that the veteran politician should be a role model of unity rather than inciting tensions.

"I am disappointed and strongly condemn the statement issued by Dr Mahathir who claimed that 'Indian society in Malaysia is still not completely loyal to this country because they identify with their country of origin'.

"This country gained independence through a social contract and in uniting our races, our fore-

fathers adopted the national integration approach instead of assimilation. Those values have been adopted by us for 60 years and it is our way of life," Aaron said.

The uproar started when Dr Mahathir said in an interview with Chennai-based Thanthi TV, a news channel in India, that Malaysian-Indians do not speak Malay but preferred Tamil instead.

A person should identify as Malay to have the right to call the country their own, he added.

Dr Mahathir claimed that Malaysian-Indians were not completely loyal to the country because they still identified with their country of origin. He also agreed that non-Malays should fully assimilate and "become Malay".

This prompted various leaders to hit out at what they felt were racist comments.

Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo said the loyalty of the Indian and Chinese communities should

not be questioned just because they speak their own mother tongue and practise their respective culture and customs.

He said Dr Mahathir should not make divisive statements as Malaysians of different races have been contributing to nation-building.

"The Federal Constitution explicitly recognises - unless expressly allowed by the Constitution itself - that there shall be no discrimination against citizens on the grounds of religion, race, descent, place of birth or gender in any law," he said in a statement yesterday.

Former Klang MP Charles Santiago posted on X, criticising Dr Mahathir for such "venom".

"Action must be taken against him for such divisive statements that are potentially harmful in this multiracial society.

"Dr Mahathir knows this is incitement. He is encouraging bigotry and hate. But he doesn't

care about the consequences of his actions," Santiago said, adding that Dr Mahathir has undone the "little good" he did for the country with such racial remarks.

Former DAP MP Kasthuri Patto said Dr Mahathir should be the last person to speak about the meaning of loyalty.

"I am a proud and loyal Malaysian, and unlike you, I work hard to see Malaysia at her best," she posted on X.

Kuala Selangor PKR chief Thiban Subbramaniam lodged a police report yesterday, saying that Dr Mahathir had made an inflammatory statement against the Chinese and Indian communities.

Posting on X, he said that he was confident the police would take necessary action against anyone regardless of their position when it comes to 3R (race, religion and royalty) issues.

Acting Muda president Amira Aisyah Abd Aziz said the former

premier should apologise for his remarks. She said Malaysian-Indians were burdened with having to defend themselves against his prejudicial remarks.

"Malaysians should not be accused and belittled for their loyalty to the country. We are all loyal to Malaysia," said Amira in a post on X.

However, Malay Proclamation Secretariat chairman Khairuddin Abu Hassan said Dr Mahathir had been misunderstood.

"Everyone needs to understand the statement made by Dr Mahathir in both explicit and implicit ways. Please don't twist his words out of context just to sensationalise news that could cause racial tensions.

"Dr Mahathir, too, always advises the Malays not to be envious of other races; instead, the Malays need to consistently work hard to regain the dignity of the people," he said in a statement.