

**A good leader's focused on nation, not self, says Dr Mahathir in latest attack on Najib**  
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Not everyone can be a leader, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, adding that the person for the job must dedicate himself to the cause of the country.

The former prime minister, interviewed by The Diplomat magazine, was asked if he would add anything to his 1986 treatise "The Challenge".

Saying he had always thought that leadership was about getting on with the work, Dr Mahathir said he now realised that being a leader alone was not enough.

"The kind of leadership we have should be one that has the capacity to focus not on himself, but on what is good for the country.

"Now I find that not anybody can be a leader. You need somebody that is dedicated to the cause of doing something for the country.

"You have to, to a certain extent, preserve your position, but the preservation is possibly because it enables you to do things that are good for the country," he said in the interview published yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, who led Malaysia for 22 years, has been a vocal critic of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, and has called for his resignation.

Najib's removal was mentioned in a good part of his interview.

At one point, Dr Mahathir replied "maybe the former deputy prime minister", referring to Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, on his choice of Najib's replacement.

He also spoke of his attendance at the recent Bersih 4 rally in August, when protestors called for Najib's resignation in the wake of the scandal involving state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), saying he was there because he supported the people's demands.

Dr Mahathir said he was not against Bersih's other demands for electoral reforms, the right to protest and greater transparency, adding that during his leadership, there were no protests such as Bersih 4.

He said people then were happy with the elections and did not dispute the results, and it was only after he had stepped down that there emerged Bersih and protestors making demands.

"There may be extraneous people who will always complain, but to have a general demonstration like that, there was none," he said, making a comparison of his time in office and Najib's.

Dr Mahathir hit out at the "red shirt" rally held on Malaysia Day last month to counter Bersih 4, saying it was state sponsored and aimed at diverting attention from the 1MDB issue.

He said it was dangerous to make race an issue at the rally "but the government wants to get people to show support for them".

On the economy, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia could see a credit downgrade in the face of the ringgit's depreciation and the 1MDB scandal, and how they were affecting investor confidence.

He said while the country needs a good economy in order to pay off debts in US dollars, Malaysia was not growing its economy and was getting poorer instead.

Dr Mahathir again said that Najib's presence is getting in the way of investor confidence, legal redress, as well as repairs in supervisory and judiciary powers.

But he expressed pessimism over such an outcome, adding there was political stalemate, and as such further public protests were unlikely.

"There should be a vote of non-confidence. But that all depends on the members of Parliament being conscious about their duties. The members of parliament are indebted or obliged or owe something to the prime minister, so they are not going to do it."

He said the next election was the only recourse for the people, but even that was no guarantee because "money goes a long way toward changing peoples' minds".

"And the people who are close to the prime minister don't have money; the prime minister has a lot of money. He admitted so," he said, referring to the controversial RM2.6 billion "donation" Najib received shortly before the 2013 general election.

On the US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), Dr Mahathir said the agreement would allow the US to open up markets everywhere for their own benefit, and with its economic advantage and dominance, they would control businesses in a country and eventually its politics as well.

"He (Najib) doesn't study the implications enough. Even if he does study, his policy is to be friendly with the Americans.

"So he is prepared to disregard the national interest in favour of being friendly with America and complying with American ideas," he said. – October 8, 2015.

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