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# Dr M: I won't be de facto PM

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**SERI ISKANDAR:** Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday denied that he will be the power behind the throne when Datuk Seri Najib Razak becomes prime minister next year.

He said talk that he would be the "de facto premier" when Najib took over in March was "baseless".

"All this is nonsense. Najib is not my man, he is his own man," he said after delivering a public lecture on "National Identity and Power Sharing" at Universiti Teknologi Petronas here yesterday.

"Of course, I am prepared to work with Najib but there is no assurance that he will listen to me.

"So, all the speculation about him being my man and me becoming de facto prime minister is baseless."

Dr Mahathir said those on the way to the highest office in the land were at first amenable to his views but would later pursue their own political agendas once they were in power.

"Once they got the position they were eyeing, then all they think about is how to leave their own mark.

"In fact they will go all out to reverse earlier decisions made during the time when I was the PM."

He, however, warned that Najib could expect a hard time when he becomes prime minister.

Citing Internet news portal Malaysia Today, Dr Mahathir said although the allegations against Najib were fictitious, they could still inflict damage.

Asked if he would accept a position in government such as senior minister or minister mentor, he said he was too old for it.

"I am 84 years old now, so I am too old to do everything at this age."

Asked about the high number of nominations received by his son, Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir, in the race for Umno Youth leader, Dr Mahathir said nominations did not necessarily mean that Mukhriz would win the post.

Relating his own experience when he was challenged by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah in 1987 for the party president's post, he said he received nominations from 75 per cent of Umno divisions but ended up only getting a slim 47-vote majority.

Mukhriz, who qualified for the contest after obtaining more than the minimum 39 nominations, is expected to face the wing's deputy chief Khairy Jamaluddin in a one-to-one fight during the party elections in March.