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Arif Shah has many pluses but he's not likely to win, says Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad does not think Barisan Nasional will win the Permatang Pauh by-election on Aug 26 but its candidate Datuk Arif Shah Omar Shah may be able to reduce the majority.

The former prime minister said Arif Shah was Barisan's best candidate and his Chinese education background was a positive factor that could help him attract Chinese votes.

"I think Arif Shah will not lose as badly as other candidates before him or other candidates in his place," he said after launching the Dunia Seni Lukis art

gallery in Jalan Pudu Ulu here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said another plus point for Arif Shah was that he was the assemblyman for Seberang Jaya in Permatang Pauh.

In Butterworth, Umno Youth executive council member Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir said voters in Permatang Pauh must decide whether they want someone who understands the local situation or a leader who aspires to go national.

He said it would be an uphill battle for Barisan Nasional to wrest the seat from the Opposition.