

THE STAR

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# Mahathir: IJN is one entity which shouldn't be privatised

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**PETALING JAYA:** Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he seldom opposed privatisation but the exception he made was Sime Darby's proposal to buy over the National Heart Institute (IJN).

"Leave this institution as it is. It is our pride and it is doing a good job as it is," he said in his blog, *chedet.com* in an entry posted at 3.57pm yesterday, about two-and-a-half hours before Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak announced the deferment of the project.

Dr Mahathir, who is an IJN patient, said there were many questions that needed to be addressed which he believed some could not be answered.

"If it is going to give the same service to civil servants and pensioners, the Government would have to pay out the same amount of money after the privatisation. How would the Government gain?" he asked.

Dr Mahathir also questioned if Sime Darby would charge the poor with the same fees and if it would make a profit by doing so.

"Will the Government continue to subsidise an ever growing bill for treatment of the poor? If so, why is there a need to privatise?" he asked further.

He added that the Government should not make decisions which would provide the Opposition with an opportunity to attack them.

Upon hearing of Najib's announcement, Dr Mahathir said he welcomed the decision.

"There has not been any complaint on the IJN. They have performed extremely well. Serving the rich and the poor. Everyone benefited from IJN, including myself," he told reporters after receiving RM150,000 from the Foreign Ministry on behalf of the Kuala Lumpur Foundation to Criminalise War which he chairs.