

# Dr M's back on the world stage

## PM to deliver Malaysia's national statement at UN general assembly

TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad is set to make a return to the world stage.

The Prime Minister arrives in New York tomorrow for a working visit to the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Dr Mahathir will deliver Malaysia's national statement during the assembly's general debate on Friday.

It's been nearly 15 years to the day since Dr Mahathir last spoke at the UN general assembly, which was on Sept 25, 2003, about a month before he retired as Malaysia's fourth Prime Minister on Oct 31.

In his 2003 UN speech, Dr Mahathir railed against the hegemony of rich and powerful countries imposing their will on weaker nations.

He called for a restructuring of the UN, saying that the world had lost its way.

"There is a Malaysian saying that when one loses his way he should go back to the beginning. We need to go back to the beginning," Dr Mahathir said.

Fifteen years on, Malaysia found itself in a new beginning.

When Dr Mahathir takes to the UN podium on Friday, he will be speaking as Malaysia's seventh Prime Minister following Pakatan Harapan's May 9 general election victory.

Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah in a media briefing on the visit said Dr Mahathir would lay out the framework of the Pakatan Harapan government's foreign poli-



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cy in his UN speech.

Saifuddin said the fundamental principles of Malaysia's foreign policy would be maintained.

Asean would remain the top agenda in the country's foreign relations.

Malaysia will also continue to practise the policy of neutrality and strive for friendly relations with all countries.

In addition, some older foreign policy elements would be revived. These include the Look East Policy and emphasis on Africa.

"But there are at least two elements which are new on the table, which is human rights and sustainable development goals," said Saifuddin.

Another thing that will not change in Dr Mahathir's UN speech this time around will be his habit of criticising what is wrong with the state of international affairs.

It is a trait that endeared him, and by extension Malaysia, to the developing world during his 22 years as the country's fourth PM from 1981 to 2003.

"Rest assured that for some of you who have followed Tun Mahathir's speeches at the UN, he

would continue to speak out on world issues such as globalisation.

"We don't really want to talk about what happened in the past, but I think what is most important is that the current government wants to have a balanced relation with all countries, which includes the superpowers," said Saifuddin.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to have bilateral meetings with a number of his counterparts on the sidelines of the UN meeting.

Saifuddin, however, declined to provide more information, saying that the details were still being worked out.

Dr Mahathir will be accompanied on his working visit by his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Saifuddin, Defence Minister Mohamad Sabu, Health Minister Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, and senior government officials.

The Prime Minister will have numerous speaking events in New York aside from his UN engagement.

On Wednesday, Dr Mahathir will take part in a dialogue with members of the US Council on Foreign Relations, a renowned independent think tank.

The dialogue will discuss the domestic situation in Malaysia and relationships with the United States and Asian countries.

The Prime Minister will then take part in a Bloomberg Global Business Forum, on the topic of emerging global trade relationships, later that same day.

The next day Dr Mahathir will deliver a speech at the Asia Society, entitled, "Insights on How Malaysia will Meet the Challenges Confronting the Security, Prosperity and Sustainability in Asia".

He will deliver the keynote address at the "Achieving Sustainable Development Goals: Unleashing the Potential of Islamic Finance" event held at UN headquarters, also on Thursday.

The event is jointly organised by the Securities Commission of Malaysia, the United Nations Development Programme and the Islamic Development Bank.

Dr Mahathir will be meeting with a number of renowned entrepreneurs as well as potential investors from the United States.

On Friday, the Prime Minister will host a dinner for the Malaysian diaspora in New York and its surrounding areas.

Dr Mahathir will arrive in New York from London where he is on a working visit from Sept 22.

He departs New York on Saturday for London to continue the second leg of his working visit to Britain from Saturday to Monday.

Saifuddin said many leaders from other countries were looking forward to Dr Mahathir's participation at the UN general assembly and want to meet him.

"He is active, articulate and vocal, so there is a lot of expectation by many UN member states as to what would be the main content of his speech this time," said Saifuddin.

# Cabinet to get draft of PTPTN repayment method

**KANGAR:** The draft of the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) repayment method will be tabled to the Cabinet in two weeks' time, says its chairman Wan Saiful Wan Jan.

Even though the total arrears was very high, he said PTPTN had the responsibility to assist borrowers to pay off their loans.

"I cannot disclose the content of the draft," he told reporters after visiting a storm-hit school yesterday.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad last Thursday lambasted errant borrowers for not settling their PTPTN loans which amounted to RM36bil.

According to Dr Mahathir, the loan defaulters included those with jobs.

Many PTPTN loan borrowers had come out in support of the prime minister's statement saying that his comments on those defaulters were spot on.

**This concerns one's behaviour and morals; when you borrow money, you have to repay, even at RM10 a month.**

Dr Maszlee Malik

Describing the loan defaulters' attitude as "negative", they said any refusal to repay PTPTN loans would affect future borrowers.

Some suggested that the government reimplement the travel ban.

The Star's article on Dr Mahathir calling out to PTPTN loan defaulters had also attracted many comments on Facebook, with many giving suggestions to curb the issue.

Meanwhile, the Education Ministry has called on all quarters, including the opposition, to cease linking PTPTN with the Pakatan Harapan manifesto for the 14th General Election.

Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik said borrowers were obliged to settle their repayments.

"Whatever the manifesto says, the borrowers have to pay the loan.

"The opposition, they just want to politicise the issue. This concerns one's behaviour and morals; when you borrow money, you have to repay, even at RM10 a month," he told reporters after visiting SK Siputeh in Kodiang, Kedah, yesterday.

Pakatan, in its general election manifesto, among others, stated that it would defer repayment of PTPTN loans for borrowers earning RM4,000 a month and below. — Bernama



## Working visit

Dr Mahathir being greeted by chargé d'affaires Mohd Suhaimi Jaafar and Malaysian High Commission officials upon arrival in London on Saturday. Dr Mahathir is on a two-leg working visit to Britain. The first is until tomorrow, while the second leg is from Sept 29 until Oct 1. He'll be in New York tomorrow. — Bernama

Weather						
	GEORGE TOWN	K. LUMPUR	JOHOR BARU	KOTA BARU	K. KINABALU	KUCHING
AM	Thunderstorms	No rain	No rain	No rain	No rain	Isolated rain
PM	No rain	No rain	No rain	No rain	No rain	Isolated thunderstorms

Prayer times											
ALOR SETAR		PENANG		K. LUMPUR		JOHOR BARU		KUANTAN		KOTA BARU	
Subuh	5:51	Subuh	5:52	Subuh	5:47	Subuh	5:38	Subuh	5:41	Subuh	5:48
Zohor	13:13	Zohor	13:13	Zohor	13:08	Zohor	13:00	Zohor	13:02	Zohor	13:06
Asar	16:23	Asar	16:22	Asar	16:15	Asar	16:03	Asar	16:06	Asar	16:16
Maghrib	19:15	Maghrib	19:15	Maghrib	19:10	Maghrib	19:02	Maghrib	19:04	Maghrib	19:08
Isyak	20:24	Isyak	20:24	Isyak	20:19	Isyak	20:10	Isyak	20:13	Isyak	20:13