

Former Malaysia leader to run for office aged 97

17th October, 2022



Image: Public domain

They say age is just a number, and that you are as young as you feel. The former prime minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad, is proving this to be true. Mr Mahathir is pushing back the years and running for office at the ripe old age of 97. He has been the country's leader twice

before. The first time was for 22 years, between 1981 and 2003; the second time was a near-two-year term from May 2018. He has announced he will run for parliament in his country's upcoming general election. He was typically coy on whether or not he has his eyes set on the top job once again. He told journalists: "We have not decided who will be prime minister because the prime minister candidate is only relevant if we win."

Mahathir Mohamad has been an ever-present force in Malaysian politics. He first became a member of parliament in 1964. He is widely regarded as being a visionary for changing his country's economic fortunes. He spearheaded Malaysia's rapid economic transformation throughout the 1980s. Mahathir's decision to contest the parliamentary seat of Langkawi marks his 11th general election campaign. Many commentators in Malaysia are sceptical about Mr Mahathir's chances because of his recent ill health. He has a history of heart trouble and has had several heart attacks and bypass operations, including a quadruple bypass surgery. He was discharged from hospital last month after contracting Covid-19.

Sources: [scmp.com](https://www.scmp.com) / [cnn.com](https://www.cnn.com) / [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com)

Writing

A 97-year-old is perfectly capable of being a politician. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

age / young / prime minister / true / office / old age / parliament / eyes / candidate / force / politics / visionary / transformation / election / campaign / ill health / surgery

True / False

- 1) The article says age is a big number. T / F
- 2) Mahathir Mohamad has been prime minister twice before. T / F
- 3) Mahathir Mohamad was once in power for 22 years. T / F
- 4) Mr Mahathir told reporters he wanted to be prime minister again. T / F
- 5) Mr Mahathir first became a politician in 1984. T / F
- 6) Mr Mahathir will be contesting his eleventh general election. T / F
- 7) Journalists think Mr Mahathir has a good chance of winning the election. T / F
- 8) Mr Mahathir has had several heart attacks. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. just | a. characteristically |
| 2. running | b. change |
| 3. announced | c. pertinent |
| 4. typically | d. thought of |
| 5. relevant | e. standing |
| 6. force | f. doubtful |
| 7. regarded | g. simply |
| 8. transformation | h. released |
| 9. sceptical | i. made public |
| 10. discharged | j. influence |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think of politicians?
- c) Are young or old leaders best?
- d) Should there be a limit on the age of national leaders?
- e) What should the retirement age be?
- f) What are the benefits of being in your nineties?
- g) What do you know about Malaysia?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Mr Mahathir?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. They say age is | a. the top job once again |
| 2. running for office at the | b. Mr Mahathir's chances |
| 3. in his country's upcoming | c. force in Malaysian politics |
| 4. He was typically | d. being a visionary |
| 5. he has his eyes set on | e. ripe old age of 97 |
| 6. Mohamad has been an ever-present | f. economic transformation |
| 7. He is widely regarded as | g. just a number |
| 8. He spearheaded Malaysia's rapid | h. surgery |
| 9. sceptical about | i. coy |
| 10. a quadruple bypass | j. general election |

Discussion – Student B

- Do you think age is just a number?
- Are you just as young as you feel?
- What do you think of having a 97-year-old leader?
- What do you think of your country's leader?
- What do you hope to be doing at the age of 97?
- Should Mr Mahathir become Malaysia's next prime minister?
- When was the last time you were coy about something?
- What advice do you have for Mr Mahathir?

Spelling

- gpvnior this to be true
- at the rpei old age of 97
- He was typically cyo
- He has enanudonc he will
- run for erplamnita
- only nlertaev if we win
- widely regarded as being a siyarviaro
- Malaysia's rapid economic ioaftonnsmrta
- spliaacet about Mr Mahathir's chances
- erevsla heart attacks
- quarudlep bypass surgery
- He was resdcdigah from hospital

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. i	4. a	5. c
6. j	7. d	8. b	9. f	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Ten

You think 10 is the best age to be. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ages. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): 20, 50 or 100.

Role B – Twenty

You think 20 is the best age to be. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ages. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): 10, 50 or 100.

Role C – Fifty

You think 50 is the best age to be. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ages. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): 20, 10 or 100.

Role D – One Hundred

You think 100 is the best age to be. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ages. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): 20, 50 or 10.

Speaking – The Best Age

Rank these with your partner. Put the best age to be at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------|-------|
| • 10 | • 45 |
| • 16 | • 60 |
| • 21 | • 75 |
| • 30 | • 100 |

Answers – True False

1 F	2 T	3 T	4 T	5 F	6 T	7 F	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.