

# MPs held for attempt to stir racial unrest: PM

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KUALA-LUMPUR, Tues. — MPs are not above the law and those detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) were arrested because they were involved in attempts to stir racial unrest, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said this to members of the European delegation at the Ninth General Assembly of the Asean Inter-Parliamentary Organisation (AIPO) during a closed-door meeting at Parliament House.

Dr Mahathir, who had earlier

opened the AIPO general assembly, told newsmen that during the meeting, members of the delegation, among other things, wanted to know the fate of the Malaysian MPs in detention.

"I explained that the MPs were not arrested because they were MPs or because of their ideologies. If others are arrested for trying to stir racial unrest, then the MPs would get the same treatment," he said when replying to questions by newsmen.

Asked to comment on the decision by the Johore Baru High

Court to nullify the Tanjung Puteri State election, Dr Mahathir said: "We, of course, accept the court's decision and are not disputing it. The only thing now is to hold a by-election."

He also said he had not received any confirmation regarding the Barisan Nasional candidate in the by-election.

However, he did not rule out the possibility of Datuk Yunus Suleiman representing the BN again.

## Many obstacles

On AIPO's plan to set up an Asean Parliament, Dr Mahathir said this was "very idealistic" and would take a very long time to be realised.

He said the European Parliament took many years to be set up and faced several obstacles.

Earlier, at the opening of the assembly, AIPO president and Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Mohamed Zahir Ismail said the organisation was working towards the establishment of an Asean Parliament.