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# Suffian would be a nobody without govt help: PM

ALOR STAR, Mon. — Former Lord President Tun Suffian Hashim would have been a nobody if the government had not helped him, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The prime minister said Tun Suffian had often made demands when he was in government service.

"He wanted a high salary and a high post . . . we were prepared to give it to him. We even gave all judges a special salary scheme, but he still complained (of low pay).

"He wouldn't have gotten to where he was if it was not for us," he said.

Dr Mahathir added that the government had "many more" things to say about Tun Suffian but did not wish to "stoop so low."

Dr Mahathir was commenting on a report in the *Singapore Law Review* which quoted a remark by Tun Suffian which he said could be attributed to most Malaysian politicians: "Oh, I am powerful, I ride in a Mercedes Benz, I can do what I please."

Tun Suffian had also allegedly stated that Malaysian politicians were a "primitive lot."

Dr Mahathir said he was not surprised by the remarks because "I know Tun Suffian's background well."

He added that the former Lord President's comments did not affect the country's stability or jeopardise its internation-

al relations.

Dr Mahathir said Tun Suffian had proven to be an ineffective leader as he had failed to achieve anything constructive in his years on the Chartered Bank board.

"What has he done there so far?" he asked.

The prime minister was speaking to reporters at the Kepala Batas airport here after arriving from Kuala Lumpur to attend a breaking of fast ceremony in his parliamentary constituency of Kubang Pasu.

Dr Mahathir said it was ironical that a person with such views could head the Election Watch group.

"With Tun Suffian, it cannot be an election watch . . . only an election eye-wash," he quipped.

Dr Mahathir also said Tun Suffian should contest in the coming general election if he wanted to prove his "political convictions."

The prime minister said Tun Suffian should try to win a seat first before trying to portray his true "moral calibre."

"He is free to contest in the election and try to be prime minister if he thinks we (the government) are *kucing kurap* (a mangy cat).

"He accuses us of lacking in morals and being primitive and talks about us driving big cars. If he wins, he can drive in a smaller car if he wishes . . . be it a Daihatsu, Proton Saga or whatever," he added.