

Dr M: Indiscipline causes traffic jams

By Saiful Azhar
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LANGKAWI, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today indiscipline among motorists was the main cause for the traffic congestion in the federal capital, adding that the jams could ease if there was co-operation from all quarters.

The Prime Minister said the congestion in the city was not due to the increase in the number of vehicles but due to indiscipline of motorists.

"If we abide by the traffic regulations, that is, if we do not stop in the yellow box and if we follow the traffic signals, there will be no traffic jam.

"If we don't, any system will not be effective to ease the congestion. We have the same number of vehicles but when the policemen are not around the traffic went haywire. Why?" the Prime Minister asked.

The Prime Minister said traffic policemen could be utilised to direct traffic in the city but it would not be cost-effective for them to merely concentrate on that job.

He said only co-operation from all quarters including motorists could ease the traffic congestion in the

city.

He said: "If the drivers are indisciplined, there is nothing we can do... we have to use the police.

"We can use the police but their job will only be directing the traffic... we could not utilise them cost-effectively," he told reporters when asked to comment on the worsening traffic congestion in the city.

Dr Mahathir and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, were on a two-day visit to the island.

Dr Mahathir said the computer system linked to traffic lights used in the city to monitor the traffic system was programmed according to a certain pattern.

"When the motorists change their habit, the pattern will fail and that causes traffic jams.

"If the motorists follow the traffic regulations like they do when in the presence of policemen, such traffic congestion will not occur," he added.

Dr Mahathir was also asked to comment on his meeting with Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans at his office in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday.

Dr Mahathir said during the meeting Evans had asked for Malaysia's perception of China. He told the visitor that Malaysia does

not believe China would emerge as a military threat to the region.

Evans was on a four-day visit to Malaysia and called on the Prime Minister to discuss the possibility of further enhancing trade and economic co-operation.

"We stressed that we should not worry or fear China because we believe China will not be a military threat to us," he said.

Dr Mahathir also told Evans that Malaysia also believed that the dispute over the Spratlys Islands could be resolved through bilateral talks.

"This has been agreed upon by China," he said, adding that besides discussing bilateral relations, he and Evans also talked about the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) and Malaysia's perception of Myanmar.

Dr Mahathir also said he told Evans that Malaysia stuck to its earlier stand that Apec should not be made a trade bloc and that member countries should be given the freedom to make their own decisions whether to accept the decisions made at last year's Apec meeting in Bogor.

The Prime Minister also made known to Australia that Malaysia wanted direct talks to be held at official

and ministerial-levels before any memorandum was forwarded at the next Apec meeting in Japan.

This was to ensure no unacceptable terms were included in the memorandum.

On Myanmar, Dr Mahathir said Australia was still unhappy with the pressure exerted by the Myanmar regime on human rights activist and leader of the Myanmar National League for Democracy Aung San Suu Kyi.

"Our stand is we should not link the Myanmar issue to an individual. We should consider the wishes of the majority of the Myanmar people.

"We believe, it will take sometime before Myanmar can accept the concept of democracy which we are practising," he added.

Asked to comment on Tan Sri Musa Hitam's appointment as the chairman of the United Nations Human Rights Commission last month, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would not use the appointment to fulfil its interests.

"We will not use the position to promote Malaysia's stand on human rights," he added.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would express its opinion on human rights through its delegation and

not the chairman of the commission.

"We are going to put forward our interpretation of human rights because the subject has been given various interpretations.

"In the West, their priority is the individual but in Malaysia and other nations in the East, the rights of the majority are above the individual's.

"This is a marked difference in interpretation between the East and the West," he added.

Asked whether the Government would give Musa a set of guidelines to carry out his duties, Dr Mahathir said: "He is chairman, he does not represent Malaysia, he is leading (the commission).

"This is an honour to Malaysia but we will not use the chairman's post to fight for our interests," he added.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir visited the site of the "Perdana Gallery" at Kisap here.

The RM5 million gallery, which would exhibit souvenirs and gifts presented to the Prime Minister by foreign and local dignitaries, would be ready in October.

Piling work at the four-hectare site has begun. Besides the gallery, a small

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PM's 8,000 gifts, souvenirs to be displayed at gallery

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dam and jetty would be built at the site which is located near Sungai Kilim.

The jetty would be used

by visitors to visit the many caves along the river. The dam is needed to sustain water supply to the area.

Dr Mahathir's collection

of 8,000 gifts and souvenirs, including cars, would be exhibited at the gallery.

They have been handed over to the Government and

have become its property.

Some of these items are being stored at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre at Padang Matsirat.