

03 APR 1997

Mahathir-MPs

MAHATHIR DEFENDS MPs OVER ATTENDANCE IN PARLIAMENT

KUALA LUMPUR, April 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the sometimes low attendance by elected representatives during Parliament sittings should not be used as an indicator to judge them.

He said sometimes the MPs would be outside the hall (dewan) but would still be listening to the proceedings through the public address (PA) system.

"If you look at the number of people in the hall, yes. But they are outside. We provide broadcast of the (proceedings) and you can listen while you are in the coffehouse, lounge and other places," he said when asked to comment on a survey by a local English daily over the daily attendance of the MPs during the Parliament sittings.

Speaking to reporters at a news conference after a one-day visit to Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) (formerly known as Universiti Pertanian Malaysia) in Serdang near here, Dr Mahathir said it does not mean that when an MP is not inside the hall during the proceedings, he or she was not participating in it.

"You can see (that) if there is anything important (being debated or raised), they will run (to go inside the hall)," he said.

While saying that the survey by the English daily could be used as an indicator, the Prime Minister said it was however not an "absolute measure of the diligence" of the MPs.

Dr Mahathir said he was however glad over the newspaper's effort in conducting the survey.

Asked if there is any proposal to increase the allowances of the MPs, Dr Mahathir said: "I am not asking for more salary. I am very happy with my salary."

"But, some people think that unless they have more salary than their subordinates, then they can't really be superior to their subordinates...I don't think salary has got anything to do (with one's performance)," he said.

--BERNAMA

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