

Lim: PM should read report first

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PETALING JAYA: The DAP has criticised Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his strong statement against the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam).

DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang said Dr Mahathir should not have swung into a political offensive against the report without reading it first.

When asked how he can know Dr Mahathir had not read the report, Lim said: "It is impossible for the Prime Minister to have gone through the entire report that was released while he

was out of the country" (Dr Mahathir returned from Uganda on Wednesday).

"Even his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, needed a few days to read the report.

"So, it's impossible for Dr Mahathir to have finished reading it immediately after returning home," he told a press conference after launching his book *BA & Islamic State* at the DAP headquarters here yesterday.

Suhakam had reported on Monday that the police had violated several aspects of human rights during the op-

position gathering at the Kemas Highway on Nov 5 last year.

Dr Mahathir has accused Suhakam of being biased, saying its report was not done in the interest of the nation but meant to please the West.

"The Government is obviously not showing any respect to Suhakam," he added.

Lumut MP Kong Cho Ha, meanwhile, defended the police's handling of illegal demonstrations.

He said most people were satisfied with the police for stopping demonstrations.

"Public order is vital for this country. Illegal demonstrations should not be encouraged," he said in a statement.

In Penang, Aliran president P. Ramakrishnan urged the Prime Minister to accept the criticism of Suhakam.

He defended Suhakam, saying it had done its job well in presenting a fair report based on evidence.

Ramakrishnan said that Suhakam's findings were "of a lawful and legitimate inquiry conducted under the authorisation of Parliament."