

Mahathir's busiest day ever as PM

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by **Ng Kee Seng** and **R. Manirajan**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: The eve of his retirement was Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's busiest day ever as prime minister.

The 77-year-old, who has led the country for 22 years, showed no signs of slowing down, parting with a firm "leadership by example" message.

Amazingly, the fasting month did not stop him from sticking to a non-stop all-day-long schedule.

Mahathir started the day with a photo session with his staff at 8am in his Putrajaya office.

After an hour-long session, he was

in parliament to attend the day's normal proceedings and to table the 8th Malaysia Plan mid-term review.

After an hour-long oral question and answer session, taking on the MPs who turned out in full force, he tabled the mid-term review report at 11.15am.

He took two hours to present the report, followed by a two-hour-long press conference and photo session with MPs, parliament staff and the press.

At 2.30pm, he left for the Putra World Trade Centre where he chaired his last Umno Supreme Council meeting.

"My last day in parliament as premier was a little bit sad and also happy. "Happy because I was able to per-

form an important task, presenting the country's mid-term review of its development plan," he said.

Asked to comment on observations that he was not serious in his oral answers, Mahathir said: "What is not serious? If certain MPs ask stupid questions, that's what they get.

DAP secretary-general Kerk Kim Hock said: "Mahathir was obviously in his farewell and playful mood.

"There was no excitement in his parting words.

"I had expected something new but there was no surprise."

PAS secretary-general Nasharudin Mat Isa said: "He did not take questions on democracy seriously. Mahathir was just playing with words."