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Dr Mahathir appointed Petronas adviser

Ramlan Said; Lim Chee Wei

PETRONAS, the national oil corporation, has appointed former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as its adviser, Utusan Malaysia reported yesterday.

In the front page story, Petronas chairman Tan Sri Azizan Zainul Abidin said Dr Mahathir had accepted the post.

"He agreed some time ago," he said, clarifying last Friday's report where Dr Mahathir was quoted as saying that he did not see much problem in becoming an adviser to Petronas. However, the former Prime Minister said then he had yet to receive any offer from the company.

Azizan admitted to some misunderstanding in the appointment but said everything had been ironed out.

He said appointing Dr Mahathir as an adviser was appropriate as he had provided much input and ideas when he was Prime Minister which had turned Petronas into an international oil company.

"He convinced the company to expand its operations abroad. The move has been proven right as Petronas now earns more revenue from its overseas ventures compared to domestic operations."

Berita Harian reported the failure of some 200,000 candidates who sat for the driving licence written test between May 2002 and last August.

The report said most of the failed candidates were "elderly" people who left school decades ago.

Road Transport Department director-general Datuk Emran Kadir provided an explanation why more people from this group failed.

"The test requires candidates to have a higher understanding and knowledge about road and traffic rules. They have to really study the drivers' educational curriculum book."

Emran said RTD was satisfied with the current curriculum and had no plans to review it.

The paper's editorial, meanwhile, commented on the move making it compulsory for all overseas-bound government-sponsored students to pass the Tata Negara (civics) course.

In another story, Utusan reported that Dong Jiao Zong had sent a letter to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi seeking a meeting to discuss Chinese educational issues.

Its president Quek Suan Hiang was quoted as saying that the association also wanted to correct perceptions that it was an ultra, chauvinistic and extremist Chinese group.