

## **Dr M goes soft on 'boycott Chinese traders'**

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**By Zulaikha Zulkifli**

Initially, Dr Mahathir Mohamad criticised the Facebook post by Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob calling on the Malays to shun Chinese traders who do not reduce prices of goods.

But now, he appears to have taken a more softer stance.

The former premier today urged the public to carefully evaluate Ismail's call before passing judgement.

"I think that before making accusations, (we should) evaluate what he said.

"What we read in the newspapers is not enough," he told reporters after a function to commemorate the 40th anniversary of bilateral relations between Malaysia and Cuba.

Mahathir said this when asked to comment on the Prime Minister's Office's statement which claimed that Ismail's comments were not targetted at any ethnic group.

Refusing to apologise, Ismail claimed that his posting had been taken out of context.

However, MCA has continued to demand an apology, with its Youth chief even suggesting that Ismail is not qualified to be a minister.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak also drew flak for not reprimanding Ismail, with observers accusing him of caving into the demands of Umno's right-wing.

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