

Sometimes can, sometimes can't – manifesto not 'Bible': Dr M

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Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad drew a comparison between the ruling coalition's manifesto and the Bible.

With regard to the manifesto, he said Pakatan Harapan need not adhere to the letter of the text.

Responding to a question at a press conference in Parliament, Mahathir admitted that Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof's appointment as Dewan Rakyat speaker was not in accordance with the manifesto, which stipulated that the speaker should be appointed from among MPs.

"(Yes), but for certain reasons, we cannot adhere to the actual manifesto. Please remember that the manifesto is not a Bible, it is a guidance.

"Sometimes we can do things, but sometimes we find that we cannot, so we have to be practical-minded," he said.

Mahathir pointed out that the people preferred a speaker who was not aligned to any political party.

Ariff, who was sworn in this morning, was a former Court of Appeal judge and Amanah member, whom reportedly relinquished his party posts on July 1.

However, opposition lawmakers from BN and PAS argued that the appointment was not done in accordance with the Standing Orders, which requires the name of the speaker to be submitted 14 days before the first sitting.

In protest, they staged a walkout during Ariff's swearing-in ceremony.

Read more: [Umno, PAS MPs chant 'tipu' and walk out over speaker's appointment](#)

Previously, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Liew Vui Keong claimed that the speaker's name was submitted on July 2, while Deputy Prime Minister Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail had said the matter was discussed on July 9.

Quizzed on this, Mahathir insisted that the name was submitted to the House on July 2.

"No, no backdating. It (the letter) was prepared earlier, so when I signed, I put

the date (in)," he added.

On July 8, it was reported that the names on Harapan's shortlist for speaker would be put to a vote.

Speculation had been rife that former Umno minister Rais Yatim might be appointed speaker, before it was reported that PKR Sungai Petani MP Johari Abdul was the frontrunner for the post.

Ariff's name only seemed to emerge after Lawyers for Liberty adviser N Surendran pointed out that appointing Johari would trigger a by-election in Kedah.

According to Surendran, Johari would have to vacate his Gurun state seat if appointed speaker – a move which he warned could tip the already precarious balance of power in the Kedah Legislative Assembly.

Mahathir also termed the walkout by opposition lawmakers today as "sandiwara" (drama), taking particular aim at former prime minister Najib Abdul Razak.

"This is sandiwara. It is just play acting.

"You know, for the first time the ex-prime minister walked out, so he knows what it means when people walked out before," he said.

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