

Dr M labels Najib 'Msia's first VIP criminal'

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Parti Pejuang Tanahair founder Dr Mahathir Mohamad has questioned a Court of Appeal's decision to temporarily return former premier Najib Razak's passport and allow the latter's trip to Singapore.

Claiming the move was extraordinary, Mahathir described Najib as Malaysia's first "VIP criminal" who was given special treatment, including being granted leave from court after citing health reasons but was seen at another location.

"This is an extraordinary case. Najib appears well, he can go to Parliament, he can campaign here and there, but he's not well enough to attend the trial.

"Now he can get his passport for overseas travel and not just that. After given his passport, he can postpone his trip to campaign in the Malacca state elections," said Mahathir.

"So I don't know what kind of administration is this. Sometimes can, sometimes cannot.

"This person is allowed, but that person is denied. There is no justice," said the Langkawi MP.

Najib on Oct 22 applied to change the dates of his passport's release and return which were initially on Oct 20 and Nov 22.

His latest application is to get his passport back on Oct 25 and return it on Dec 6.

He said this is because he was tasked to assist Umno's machinery in the upcoming Malacca state polls, with nominations set on Nov 8 and polling on Nov 20.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin yesterday said all public gatherings related to the Malacca polls will be banned until Nov 27 as part of procedures to prevent a spike in Covid-19 infections.

A three-person Court of Appeal bench chaired by Kamaludin Md Said on Oct 18 unanimously allowed the former prime minister's application for the release of his passport from Oct 20 to Nov 22.

Kamaludin ruled that the explanation by the former premier's legal team, for the temporary release of his passport so that Najib could be with his daughter Nooryana Najwa, who is expected to give birth in Singapore in early November, is reasonable.

Commenting further, Mahathir said the consideration given to Najib is different from other ordinary citizens who were charged and imprisoned.

"This person (Najib) has been convicted but he is not in jail and still has an escort like a VIP - the first VIP criminal in Malaysia," said Mahathir.

Najib's legal team filed the application for a temporary return of his passport as the travel document is being held by the Court of Appeal.

The Court of Appeal had previously heard Najib's appeal to quash his RM42 million SRC corruption case conviction and sentencing. The decision on the appeal has been reserved for a date yet to be fixed.

The High Court in Kuala Lumpur previously allowed a similar application for Najib's wife, Rosmah Mansor, for temporary access to her passport, so she could be in Singapore and give support to Nooryana.

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