

**Dr Mahathir to speak at bloggers event
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Popular blogger Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be the 'surprise speaker' at the third annual 'Bloggers Event of the Year' – also known as BUM2009 – to be held tomorrow at the Lake View Club in Subang Jaya.

BUM organising committee co-chair Ahirudin Attan confirmed that the highlight of the event would be the participation of the former prime minister who would be holding an hour-long dialogue with the participants.

Incidentally, Mahathir became a blogger – his blog is called Chedet – on May Day last year, coinciding with BUM2008.

Organisers are hoping that Mahathir's presence will attract a higher turnout of bloggers and the media at the event.

Held to coincide with World Press Freedom Day which fell on May 3, the event focuses on both the old and new media with special reference to the role of blogs and bloggers.

And departing from previous years, the organisers go one step further by inviting editors from the mainstream media to share the platform with practitioners from the new media.

Among the 14 speakers scheduled for the event are two Malaysiakini editors – Steven Gan and Fathi Aris Omar – and The Sun editor R Nadeswaran.

Parliamentarian-cum-blogger Jeff Ooi and Selangor state assemblyperson Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad, along with civil society activists such as KJ John and lawyers Art Harun and Philip Koh will also be providing their perspective on the clash between old and new media.

The Star's group chief editor Wong Chun Wai has tentatively confirmed his participation as well, said the organisers.

Have the media failed us?

The topics for discussion in the one-day event revolve around the theme of '4th and 5th Estates – on a collision course?'

"'Have they failed us?' is a question that will be asked of the mainstream media as well as the new media," said Ahiruddin, who is the interim president of the National Alliance of Bloggers (All-Blogs)

Additionally, for the first time in the history of BUM, there will be a session conducted entirely in Bahasa Malaysia, chaired by Malaysiakini columnist Helen Ang, and featuring several leading bloggers including former New Straits Times editor-in-chief A Kadir Jasin and former Suara Keadilan editor Faisal Mustaffa.

BUM2009, which runs from 10:30am to 8:15pm, will cost between RM50 and RM60 per person and includes a buffet lunch.

There is only room for 200 bloggers and bloggers-to-be at the event. Check out the official blogsite for details and full schedule.

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