

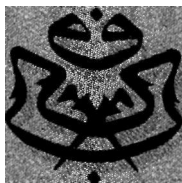
Mahathir confirms attendance at assembly

PUTRAJAYA: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has confirmed his attendance at the opening of the Umno general assembly next week, and will be given a front row seat.

Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Mohd Radzi Sheikh Ahmad said his office had received a letter from Dr Mahathir on Tuesday, confirming that he and Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali would attend the opening of the general assembly next Wednesday.

"We are happy, pleased and honoured that Tun Dr Mahathir has agreed to come," he told reporters after chairing the Home Affairs Ministry's post-Cabinet meeting yesterday.

Radzi said that going by protocol, Dr Mahathir would be seated third from centre in the front row. The first seat would be reserved for Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, wife of party deputy president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, followed by Dr Siti Hasmah and then Dr Mahathir.



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Asked if Dr Mahathir would be allowed to speak at the pre-council meeting to be held on Monday, Radzi said it was "highly unlikely", and he was also confident that the former party president would not hold a press conference on the sidelines of the opening ceremony.

"I don't think he would want to do that. I'm sure when he was Umno president, he did not like others to do that as well. He will be there to attend the ceremony with other VIP invitees like (MIC president) Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and other component party leaders," he said.

"If you are looking for something out of the ordinary during this meeting, that will not happen. Nothing out of the ordinary will happen. We will stick to tradition and convention of the party and assembly."