

# Shahrir: Dr M cannot expect all views to be accepted

NST- 3/5/2006

■ **By Leslie Andres**  
news@nst.com.my

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is entitled to express his views like any Malaysian, but he should not expect his views to be accepted by everyone, Backbenchers Club president Datuk Shahrir Samad said yesterday.

Shahrir said it was not rational for those who give their opinion to demand that their views be accepted by all.

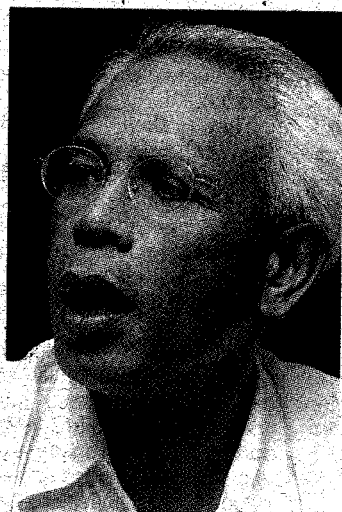
Referring to the scrapping of the bridge project over the Johor Strait, Shahrir said the Government had made a decision and this should be respected.

"In this era of openness under Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, anyone can give their opinion. What cannot be accepted is that we expect our opinions to be accepted by all.

"In fact, it is our responsibility to give our views as long as it is not done with ulterior motives," he told reporters after a function to present women MPs with the first anti-snatch theft handbag.

Shahrir was asked to comment on statements by Dr Mahathir disputing the Government's decision to scrap the Johor Strait bridge project.

The former PM had said on Monday that it was his right as a citizen to voice his opinion on the matter if the country's sovereignty were threatened. Dr Mahathir had said if Malaysia "surrendered its sovereignty to Singapore", it was a "half-past-six nation with



Shahrir says the Government's decision should be respected

no guts".

Asked to comment on Dr Mahathir's contention that it was "no use" talking to the media as they would not have published his statements, Shahrir said the media had the right to choose what to publish. "We are free to give our opinions, but we have no right to tell the media what to print. They have the right to decide themselves what they want to print," he said.

Shahrir said he has had on many occasions issued statements that were not picked up by the media.

He said he was only against the media twisting statements or taking statements out of context. "That I cannot accept," he said.