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Shoe garland idea under fire

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MIC delegate's anti-Dr M reaction rude and extreme, says Hisham

PUTRAJAYA: The suggestion to garland Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's photograph with slippers is rude, uncalled for and extreme.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said even if MIC members were unhappy with the former prime minister's statement for "so-called interference" in the party's affairs, they need not go to such extent.

"I view this suggestion as extreme and disrespectful. We must never forget our values and culture of respecting others. If we want others to respect us, then we must accord respect to others.

"We must lead by example. MIC members must show that they respect others and respect leaders, and are individuals who value cul-

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DATUK SERI HISHAMMUDDIN TUN HUSSEIN



ture and tradition," he said in a statement here yesterday.

Hishammuddin, who is also Home Minister, was commenting on a suggestion raised by a delegate during the MIC's 63rd general assembly to garland Dr Mahathir's photograph

with slippers.

It came about after some members got upset with Dr Mahathir, who was quoted by *Makkal Osai* as saying that party president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu had done nothing for the Indian community and that

he had "stayed too long".

Tanjong Malay Association president Fadzil Shuib said the suggestion was highly inappropriate, considering that Dr Mahathir was an elder statesman.

"We are very unhappy with the comment from a fellow Malaysian. It's uncalled for because Dr Mahathir has done a lot for this country," said Fadzil, adding that both Samy Vellu and the delegates should apologise to Dr Mahathir.

"What Dr Mahathir said is fair comment and a fact," said Fadzil.

Barisan Nasional Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin said after chairing a meeting that it condemned the remark, which was unfair and did not reflect the coalition's collective spirit.

Samy Vellu said MIC would initiate disciplinary action against the delegate who had proposed the "garland".

"We are shocked and will ask him to explain to our disciplinary committee," he said, adding that he had immediately asked the delegate to stop his debate and retract his words but this was not reflected in media reports.

He said while Dr Mahathir's statement had hurt the delegates' feelings, it was "not necessary to ridicule him like that" as MIC respected him as a statesman and "an illustrious leader."

MIC Youth chief T. Mohan said they were also against the suggestion as it was improper and not reflective of Indian culture.