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Dr M: Issue has nothing to do with ethnicity

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KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the call to boycott Chinese traders was unwarranted.

"I think that is a negative way of trying to solve the problem. Find out why costs have gone up," he said as he affirmed that the issue had nothing to do with ethnicity.

"This is not about Chinese or Malay. This is about the prices of fuel falling and why the prices of goods have not.

"This involves all traders," he said, adding that Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob might have spoken too hastily.

However, Dr Mahathir refused to be drawn to say whether Ismail Sabri's call was racist.

"I cannot comment because there are some who also call me racist," he quipped.

He said a factor causing high prices was the depreciating ringgit - resulting in Malaysians having to pay more for imported goods.

"So, we don't get the pure benefit from the reduction of fuel prices," he said at a FRIM event here yesterday.

Gerakan and DAP lodged police reports yesterday in relation to Ismail Sabri's post, which they argue was racially-tinged.

Gerakan vice-president Datuk A. Kohilan Pillay said it was pointless to pit Malaysians against Malaysians on national issues.