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Dr M criticises 1MDB in interview

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VOICING OUT: Former premier demands account of funds

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FORMER prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad was recently interviewed by Clare Rewcastle Brown, a UK investigative journalist who is founder and editor of Sarawak Report, a news portal openly critical of the Malaysian government.

Brown, who was born in Sarawak to British parents, is also known for her critical reports against the Sarawak government under previous chief minister Tun Abdul Taib Mahmud.

Her March 14 interview with Mahathir highlighted his disapproval of strategic development company, 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) and related issues.

The interview went ahead despite the government's directive to the At-

torney-General to conduct an independent audit of 1MDB accounts.

In the interview, held at Dr Mahathir's office in Perdana Leadership Foundation in Putrajaya, the former premier said he was not satisfied with 1MDB's announcement that the US\$2.32 billion (RM8.61 billion) parked in Cayman Islands had been fully redeemed.

He demanded that 1MDB reveal the funds' "whereabouts".

"The explanation does not enlighten us on anything. I want to know which bank it is kept in now.

"A billion dollars, you must keep it somewhere, you see. I don't know where the money is — that is part of transparency," he was quoted

as saying

Dr Mahathir also did not believe 1MDB would benefit the country in any way and questioned the billions of ringgit invested in petroleum exploration company PetroSaudi International.

He also accused the government of "gambling money in hedge funds".

"I don't think that it serves any purpose. That's my difference with the government. I don't think that it is necessary for us to have a fund like this. We are doing well enough

without a fund... in the first place, they got the money to lend to the Saudis and they put it in hedge funds.

"The government should not be gambling money in hedge funds."

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**Tun Dr Mahathir
Mohamad**
former prime
minister