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Newspaper	NEW STRAITS TIMES
Date	17 NOVEMBER 2016

Dr M in Bersih T-shirt mocked

NST- 17/11/2016

'IRONY OF IRONIES': Netizens aghast at ex-PM who used to scorn street rallies

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A VIDEO clip of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad wearing a yellow Bersih T-shirt and calling on Malaysians to join the Bersih rally on Saturday has been rebuked by many.

Facebook user Khairul Azwan Sa'adon 'joined scores of Malaysians who pointed out the irony of Dr Mahathir's call.

"I have mixed feelings on this.

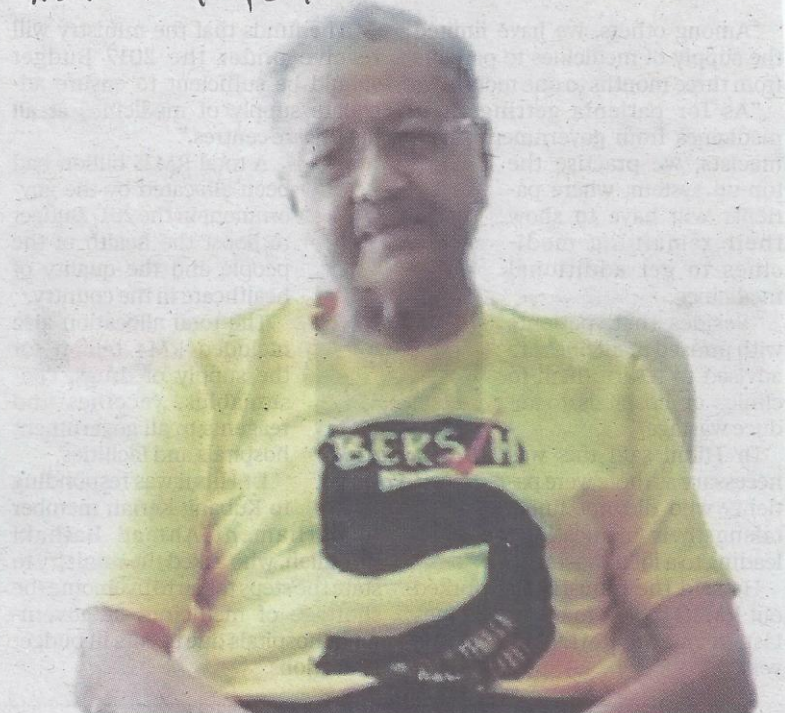
"It's one thing seeing him doing a cameo in last year's event, (and) it's another promoting him as the face of Bersih because people with long memories will always associate him with why we have Bersih in the first place," remarked Khairul.

Some scratched their heads in disbelief while others called the situation the "irony of ironies".

"We are truly living in the Twilight Zone now," a user wrote.

During the former prime minister's era, freedom of expression was largely regulated under the Official Secrets Act and the Sedition Act.

Under *Operasi Lalang* in 1987, 106 people, including activists, opposition politicians, intellectuals and students, were detained without trial under the Internal Security Act (ISA).



A YouTube video grab showing Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad wearing a Bersih T-shirt.

The ISA detention then was the second largest since the May 13, 1969 riot.

Curbing freedom of expression further, the publishing permits of *The Star*, *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, *The Sunday Star* and *Watan* were revoked.

Another user, Gopati Krsna Dasa, drew reference to the law of karma, while Christopher Siow questioned Dr Mahathir's motives, days after he was seen wearing a "Free Anwar Now" badge at a Pakatan Harapan convention on Sunday.

During Dr Mahathir's era, his then deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was sacked, put on trial and imprisoned for sodomy

charges.

This also gave rise to the Reformasi movement which saw street protests.

Facebook user Peter Lim said Malaysia would not have had any street rallies if Dr Mahathir had changed his tune earlier during his administration.

"Are you going to arrest the great old man?" asked another user, Jeff Balan.

A number of social media users laughed the matter off, deeming it customary for politicians to change their tunes to suit their agenda.

Kelvin Khoon wrote: "Hahaha... politician" on his account.