

Newspaper	THE STAR
Date	9 NOVEMBER 2016

Dr M back in Parliament

Ex-PM reappears as Pribumi chairman after three years

THREE years after his last appearance, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is back in Parliament.

This time, Dr Mahathir, who is chairman of Parti Pribumi Bersatu, was there to meet members of the Opposition and was greeted on arrival at 10.30am yesterday by DAP leader Lim Kit Siang.

He is also believed to have met Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and former deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin before going for the session on the immunity of MPs.

Others at the session included Parti Warisan Sabah president Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and PAS' Pokok Sena MP Datuk Mahfuz Omar.

Later, Dr Mahathir said it was unfair for the Government to stop

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people, especially parliamentarians, from speaking on issues like 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and the report by the US Department of Justice.

"Yes, there is a limit to the freedom of speech and freedom of press as otherwise, this may cause racial tension, among other issues.

"However, Parliament is free from these limits, especially with regards to the freedom of speech. They represent the people and their grouses and they must be heard and allowed to speak freely," he said.

Parliamentarians, he said, should not be subjected to the Official

Secrets Act (OSA).

"But from what I understand, OSA is for policies and not crime committed by the Government," he said, adding that those who point out these criminal activities have been called by the police and brought to court on no basis.

He also hit out at Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia who he claimed was biased.

In a statement, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said called Dr Mahathir's appearance a "gimmick". "The action of Opposition MPs in inviting Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Parliament shows that they are so desperate to the point that they need to get outside support. It is nothing more than an Opposition gimmick," she said.

"I wonder why the Opposition did

not use the existing standing orders to discuss something that is not agreed upon in the Dewan Rakyat," said Azalina, adding that the Dewan Rakyat had its own mechanisms and procedures to address issues fairly.

"Could the Parliamentary reforms that we have implemented under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najb Tun Razak have been realised during the time he (Dr Mahathir) was prime minister?" she pointed out.

Umno supreme council member Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek called on Dr Mahathir "not to behave like Trump".

"Trump stressed that he would only recognise the election results if he wins and claimed that there is rigging if it went otherwise. That is the same as the opposition here," he said.

The Star - 9/11/2016