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FLIP FLOP ON CHINA

MIC: Dr M's
backtracking
no surprise
any more

Nst - 8/6/2017 Pg. 10

KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has made yet another U-turn by asking Asian countries to form an economic pact with China, said MIC treasurer-general Datuk Seri S. Vell Paari.

He said this was because the former prime minister had previously criticised China for investing in Malaysia's Forest City and Tun Razak Exchange development projects.

"What Dr Mahathir said comes as no surprise. He has been changing his stand on issues.

"This started 18 months ago when he started attacking Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak," Vell Paari told the *New Straits Times* yesterday.

Speaking at the 23rd International Conference on the Future of Asia yesterday, Dr Mahathir suggested members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement invite China as a member following the withdrawal of the United States.

"Without the US, countries can think of new ways to cooperate with each other more equitably.

"To exclude China is to ignore the role it plays in this region and... create an unequal situation between China and the rest," he was quoted as saying.

Malaysia is one of three South-east Asian countries in TPP, which has 11 members after the US's withdrawal.

Vell Paari also described Dr Mahathir as a "flip-flop" politician who allegedly changed his stance on the Malaysia People's Aid scheme and Good and Services Tax, among others.

"I'm sure he's aware he has been flip-flopping... but he does not care what the public thinks of him as long as he gets to bring down a democratically elected leader."

Universiti Utara Malaysia political pundit Professor Dr Azizuddin Mohd Sani said he was not surprised by Dr Mahathir's shifting stance on China.

"He says what he feels is convenient to him and depending on which side he takes."

Umno information chief Tan Sri Annuar Musa said Dr Mahathir was an example of a leader who practised "Machiavellian politics".

"He will keep making U-turns and contradictions... so much so that they will become irrelevant."