

'Missing' MPs get warning

Dr M dismisses talk about disciplinary issues in Pakatan

KUALA LUMPUR: A warning has been issued to Pakatan Harapan MPs who were absent from Dewan Rakyat proceedings, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

According to Dr Mahathir, such absenteeism was discussed in length during a recent Cabinet meeting.

He noted that ministers were often overseas to attend international meetings that were taking place at this time of the year.

"As for the MPs, sometimes they have their own issues. Sometimes, they are not in the House but they are in the Parliament building."

"We have given them a warning to attend (the proceedings)," he told reporters in Parliament lobby yesterday.

Last Thursday, the debate on Budget 2020 was halted temporarily due to a lack of quorum.

Under Standing Order 13, there must be at least 26 MPs in the 222-seat Dewan for the sitting to proceed.

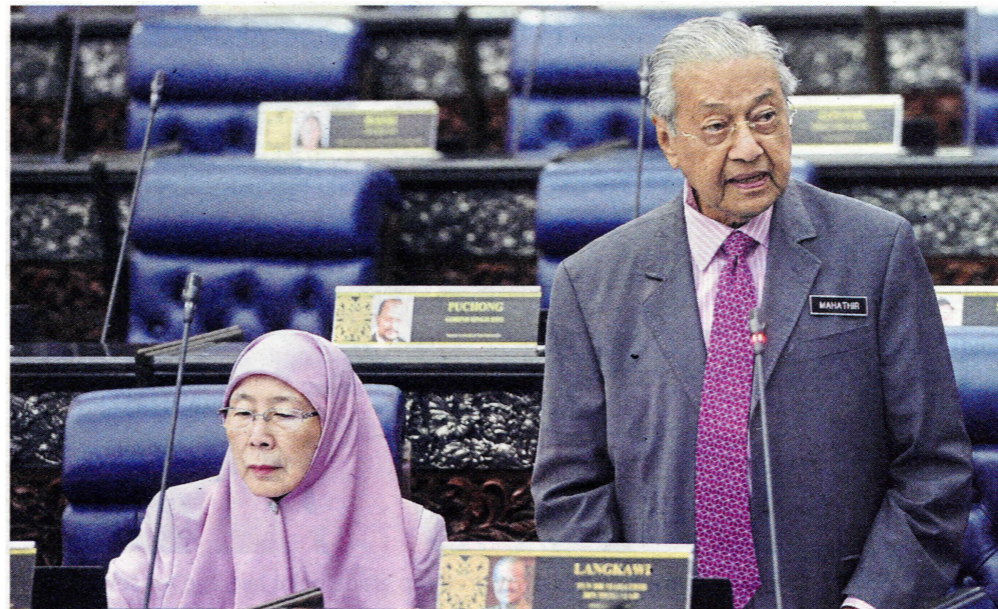
Dr Mahathir, however, dispelled the notion that there was a discipline issue among MPs, saying that such incidences happen in other countries, which he had visited in the past.

"Sometimes, the issue of quorum arises due to political reason," he added.

The poor attendance of MPs also drew the attention of Ayer Hitam MP Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong, who pointed out that despite the quorum incident last Thursday, Pakatan ministers were still visibly absent from proceedings in the Dewan Rakyat on Monday.

"As of now, there is no Cabinet minister in Dewan Rakyat."

"There are only two deputy ministers who are listening to the debates on Budget 2020," Dr Wee



In the House: Dr Mahathir speaking during the Dewan Rakyat proceedings alongside Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail. — Bernama

said in a Facebook posting on Monday.

"Looks like all of Pakatan Harapan's Cabinet ministers did not take heed from the incident last Thursday," he added.

Dr Wee, who's the MCA President, also attached the hashtag #MenteriSilaDudukDengarPerbahasanJanganLari in his posting.

Dr Mahathir's warning is not the first. In July last year, the premier also expressed his dissatisfaction over the attendance of his Cabinet ministers and their deputies in Parliament.

Dewan Rakyat Deputy Speaker Datuk Rashid Hasnon had also reprimanded ministers and deputy ministers for their absence in Parliament then.

On Oct 26 last year, Speaker Tan Sri Mohamad Arif Md Yusof ordered the House to stand down after Kapit MP Datuk Alexander

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Nanta Linggi pointed out the lack of quorum.

During the previous Barisan Nasional administration in 2017, a ministry's allocation was almost derailed due to the lack in quorum.

In Nov 2017, chaos ensued in the

Dewan Rakyat when the ministry's allocation was narrowly passed by just one vote during a bloc vote.

The bloc vote made it through with 52 MPs voting for it to be passed while 51 voted against the allocation.

That incident also saw the resignation of former Kapar MP G. Manivannan as the PKR secretary whip, as he failed to sign on former Stampin MP Julian Tan's vote when the bloc vote was called.

Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who was the Deputy Prime Minister then also took action against Barisan lawmakers who were absent when the bloc vote was called for.

He had advised the absent MPs to be more serious about attending Parliamentary proceedings, adding that "domestic action" was taken without elaborating further.