

Dr M needs rest, unlikely to attend Umno assembly

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KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is being treated at the National Heart Institute (IJN), plans to take complete rest for several weeks, including staying away from the Umno general assembly tomorrow.

"I want to rest... not making any statement... hope the (Umno) assembly runs smoothly," he said in an interview with Bernama and RTM yesterday.

Dr Mahathir appeared in high spirits although he was rather weak during the 20-minute interview.

With him was his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

Dr Mahathir said he was fortunate to have sought immediate treatment when he had the mild heart attack as this had enabled the specialist doctors to dilute the blood clot in his coronary artery.

"The heart attack was mild but I came early, three hours after the attack. They (the doctors) managed to dilute the clot and there was no blockage."

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Dr M says thanks for prayers

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"It's just that I have to rest for at least three weeks so that the damage (to the artery) can heal. So far so good. I don't want to think of anything else."

Dr Mahathir, who will turn 81 next month, underwent a coronary bypass operation at IJN in 1989.

Following that, he had gone for regular check-ups and the last time he was admitted to IJN was in December last year for follow-up treatment.

He said the doctors had advised him to rest completely and not to undertake any activity or think of anything that could affect his health.

"The doctors advised me not to be active, do light exercise and to watch my diet.

"(I) feel like writing but the doctor advised me against it. (I) thought of bringing my bag, to do some work, (the doctors) told me not to do so. We have to obey doctors' orders."

Recalling his tight schedule, especially during the past one week, Dr Mahathir admitted that his appointments had

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been rather excessive and had caused him chest pains.

"I had to travel long distances and usually I work. But last Saturday morning, I went horse-riding which lasted quite some time.

"Thereafter, I flew to Saudi Arabia.

"(I) arrived in Saudi Arabia at 11pm Malaysian time and while there I attended a function which was also graced by

the Saudi Arabian King.

"Later at 7am Malaysian time, I flew back here, (I) slept in the aeroplane.

"One-and-a-half hours after arriving here, I attended the official launch of a company. Thereafter, I attended a dinner until midnight and slept at 1am.

"At 8am, I flew to New Zealand and arrived at 11pm local time. For one whole day

there; I gave three speeches and a Press conference for an hour."

Dr Mahathir said he returned home on Wednesday, arriving at 5pm, and two hours later, he attended his son's Hari Raya open house until 11.30pm.

As he was about to sleep, he experienced chest pains.

He thanked everyone who had prayed for his health, including those who had performed *hajat* prayers for his quick recovery.

"The prayers and inspiring words mean a lot to me, and I wish to thank the people for their kind gestures."

On the visit by Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who had dropped by on the first day he was admitted to IJN, Dr Mahathir thanked the prime minister for his deep concern and for visiting him although at that time he (Dr Mahathir) was still under sedation.

Meanwhile, Dr Siti Hasmah said she did not panic over Dr Mahathir's condition because it was not the first time that her husband had suffered a heart attack.

"Compared to my experience in 1989 when Tun had his first heart attack, the situation this time was less severe.

"Previously, I was rather panicky. This time, the situation was the same but I did not panic. I already knew what to do," she said.

"As soon as it happened, I called Dr Nasir (Datuk Dr Nasir Muda from IJN) to come to the house. I knew what had happened. I informed my children and the driver to get ready."

On her husband's food intake, Dr Siti Hasmah said the cook at their home prepared the diet for Dr Mahathir.

"Before the heart attack, Tun maintained a vegetarian diet and until today his diet is the same."

She also thanked everyone for their words of encouragement in difficult times.

Since his admission to IJN, many dignitaries have visited Dr Mahathir, including Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, who dropped by yesterday morning. — Bernama