

Dr M back from European vacation

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SUBANG: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad returned home from a two-week European vacation to a welcome by about 1,000 supporters yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, who retired in 2003, had recently launched strong attacks on his successor Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Dr Mahathir's main grouses against the present government include its decision to cancel the Johor bridge project and its handling of the national car company, Proton.

Abdullah, who recently also returned from an overseas vacation, has since broken his silence to defend his administration's actions, including declassifying certain official documents on the bridge.

Speaking to reporters, Dr Mahathir said the Government should declassify the documents on its offer to sell sand and the use of Malaysian airspace by Singapore in its negotiations on the bridge project.

He added that the declassified letters which were released last week by the Government had already been made

public during his time.

Dr Mahathir also expressed his disappointment that Umno was now denying him the avenue to voice his views.

He said that only three years ago, he was praised sky high when he stepped down but now "I am not even allowed to meet and speak with our Malaysian students in London."

Meanwhile, Overseas Umno clubs chairman Datuk Mohd Shafie Apdal said they had never received any request from Dr Mahathir to meet Malaysian students in London.

He said any meeting with Malaysian students overseas must be arranged in advance.

"This is to ensure that they will be free and not be disturbed when they have examinations," he said.

To a question, Shafie said Umno had no problem if Malaysian students overseas want to meet Dr Mahathir.

"Dr Mahathir is our father. He is a respected former prime minister who has done a lot for the country's development."