

Petrol to be subsidised if prices go up

► Saudi production cuts after Yemeni rebel attack may affect world rates.

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PUTRAJAYA: Saudi Arabia's suspension of operations at two Aramco oil plants following attacks by Yemeni rebels will surely affect oil prices worldwide, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

However, the prime minister said the government would subsidise the prices of petrol should there be an increase.

"If Saudi Arabia has to stop producing a million barrels of refined oil, it would affect the global oil price," he said at a press conference after the Putrajaya Boat Race event yesterday.

"But in Malaysia when oil prices go up, we subsidise. In the United

Kingdom, if oil goes up, it (the government) raises taxes."

Mahathir was asked if the government would review the current retail price of RON95 petrol at RM2.08 in the event of a rise in world oil prices following the incident.

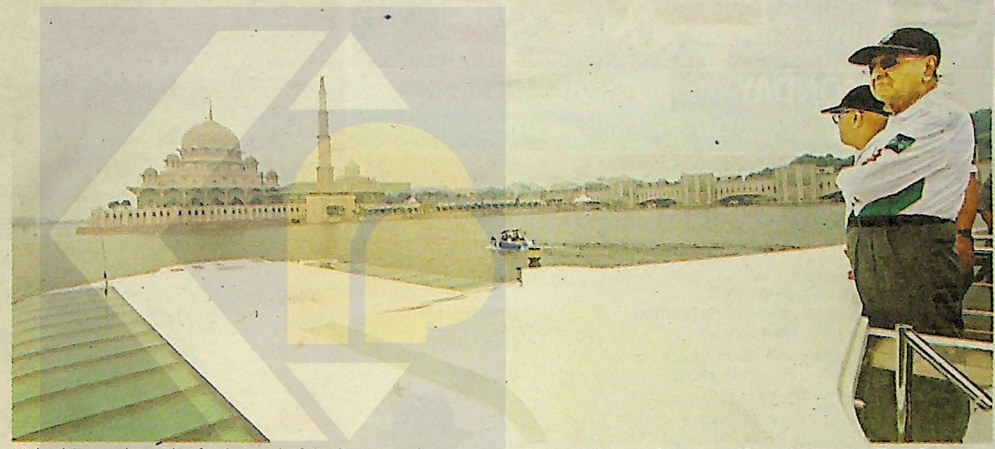
Meanwhile, he said Asean countries needed to cooperate to find a long-term solution to the annual haze problem.

He said cooperation from Indonesia was needed to fight the trans-boundary haze issue.

"To put in place a solution to the haze problem, cooperation from all Asean countries is needed and only then can we come up with a plan to tackle the haze problem."

Mahathir said he has yet to write to Indonesian President Joko Widodo about the haze issue as Malaysia was in the midst of gathering information on fires in Indonesia.

"We need to study all the evidence first as there are claims by Indonesia that the haze comes from Malaysia. The government needs to verify whether or not such allegations are true," he said in response to a claim



Mahathir watching the final round of the boat race between Universiti Malaya and Universiti Putra Malaysia at Tasik Putrajaya yesterday. - BERNAMAPIX

made by Indonesian Environment Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar.

Mahathir, who was in a jovial mood, said in jest that he needed to wear a mask when horse riding yesterday so that the public would

not be able to recognise him, adding the haze was not too bad yesterday and he was able to go horse-riding.

"Horse back riding is a kind of therapy for me," he tweeted in his Twitter account @chedetofficial.

In a two-minute video post on his official Facebook and YouTube accounts, the 94-year-old prime minister was also seen feeding carrots to the horse, and later giving a thumbs-up sign.