

'I'll put the fear of God in them'

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr (Mahathir Mohamad) believes he will not be able to stamp out corruption but says he will "put the fear of God in those people who are corrupt."

"They will not live happily ever after. Because they will know that always there will be this sword hanging over their heads."

The Prime Minister, in a special interview with the Press, said there would be forces which would not like to see corruption stamped out.

"But we are not at that extreme stage where everything is involved, where you touch one person you are going to involve a lot of people," he said.

"But I will admit that I'll not be able to stamp out corruption. But I'll be able to limit it to a certain extent."

He said the Government was looking into the idea of changing the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) back to an "anti-corruption agency."

Computation

This was because quite a lot of the time of the NBI had been taken up investigating things which were not related to corruption, like the price and quality of goods.

"I would like to focus on corruption. Once we know that officers have declared their assets, then we'll be able to compute their wealth at any given time.

"As you know, one of the ways the Income Tax Department gets their victims (perhaps not the right word to use) is to compute the wealth of a person if they suspect he is not paying his income tax on his wealth or earnings.

"The Income Tax Department will examine all his assets, his wealth, what he does, how much money he has in the bank and all that. By doing so, they are able to compute his wealth and assess how much tax he has not paid."

The Income Tax Department had been told to instruct the NBI on how to do the wealth computation.

"So once we've got all these forms gathered, at any time at all we can zero in on a person suspected of being corrupt, or even on a random basis to check on the wealth by means of wealth computation.

"If we find that some person cannot explain why he has more wealth than he

should have, some action will have to be taken against him. That's the only way," the Prime Minister added.

On the corps of people he will have to build up to fight corruption, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said there would be enough dedicated, honest people from among the politicians, the civil servants and the police.

"These are the people who need to be identified.

Because they are not corrupt, they are not scared of the measures taken and they are willing to do things."

"These people have been identified or are being identified and I think we have a sufficient number of them to be able to rely on their co-operation."