

PM: DON'T INTERFERE

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Certain judges not adhering to their role, says Dr M

By LEE MIN KEONG

KUANTAN, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad criticised certain judges today for encroaching on the roles reserved for the other branches of government.

The Prime Minister said that of late, certain judges had voiced their views on political issues outside the courtroom, such as the call to review the Federal Constitution.

This was "against the system of parliamentary democracy" and would result in people losing confidence in the judiciary, he added.

Dr Mahathir said it was immaterial whether these judges had voiced support for or opposition against the Government.

He added that these judges were no longer adhering to their rightful role of administering justice in a democratic system but had instead encroached

on the roles reserved for the other branches of government.

"The judiciary should be neutral in politics," he said at a dinner hosted by the State Government at the Mentri Besar's residence here tonight.

The Prime Minister arrived here yesterday for a three-day official visit to the State.

Dr Mahathir said people who disagreed with the political views of these judges would have little faith in them if they were to go before them to seek justice.

This would result in the people losing confidence in the judiciary, he added.

Dr Mahathir said he had to be "blunt" in criticising these judges because they had gone beyond their bounds.

He said many were afraid to criticise the judges because they felt they would be breaking the law.

"However, we are not criticising them while they are in the process of

administering justice in the courts. We criticise them only when they leave their courts and start making statements on political matters," he added.

Dr Mahathir said there was now a trend for groups to misunderstand the roles played by the legislature, the executive and the judiciary in the democratic system.

Groups which had no role to play in politics were beginning to get involved in politics.

He pointed out that Cabinet Ministers could not play the role of a judge in administering justice and likewise, a judge could not play the role of a Minister in politics.

If this trend continued, it would lead to chaos because the people would not know who was actually administering the country and who was administering justice, he added.

"There would be utter confusion and aimlessness in the country," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the call

by a "frustrated" group of people for a review of the Constitution was extremely dangerous and could create tension among the people.

He said if the Constitution was open to a review, there might even be quarters who would want to abolish the special privileges of the Malays while others may call for the citizenship rights of the other races to be revoked.

"If we don't hold on to these rights as guaranteed in the Constitution, then there will be tension and unrest. If that were to happen, we may not be able to control the situation," he added.

Dr Mahathir said if the people loved and valued peace, prosperity and stability in the country, they should not ask for a review.

The Prime Minister said the Government had been fair to all the races but there would always be dissatisfaction because not all demands could be met