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Mahathir-Court

LAW MAY BE AMENDED TO CLARIFY COURTS' POWER TO HEAR POLITICAL CASES

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ALOR SETAR, Sept. 20 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government may be forced to amend the law to further clarify the powers of the court to hear cases brought by members of political parties to prevent wasting the court's time.

UMNO would first get the correct interpretation as to whether or not the courts had the powers to hear such cases, he added.

"...we have to amend the law so as to make it clear that the courts have no jurisdiction in this field," he told a press conference after a meeting with Kubang Pasu UMNO division, Youth and Wanita members at the Menteri Besar's official residence in Mentaloon.

Dr Mahathir, who is head of Kubang Pasu division, said this when commenting on the call by Law Minister to UMNO members to refrain from taking party cases to the courts in view of many such cases lately.

Asked whether he was unhappy with the decisions made by the courts on cases brought by UMNO members recently, Dr Mahathir said: "I feel, may be I am wrong, that the courts have no jurisdiction (in these cases)." -- more

KYH AAM LDB

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Mahathir-Court 2 Alor Setar

He added, however, that the matter required clarification from the courts as to whether they had jurisdiction or otherwise.

He said: "From what I know, we have prohibited political party problems from being resolved by the courts unless if a member wanted the court to enforce a party decision. Only that the court can do.

"But we find that the court is giving verdicts, which as far as I know, on matters the courts have no jurisdiction.

"But when they make the orders, we cannot ignore them, we have to abide by them."

It was clear in the UMNO Constitution that if any member took UMNO problems to court, the member would be expelled except in the case of the right given to him under the Constitution to ask the court to enforce a party decision, he added.

Dr Mahathir said if this power was given to the courts, in party politics there were people who would make indiscriminate use of the courts.

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"The question of like or dislike cannot be resolved by the law. If people don't like, they are bound to dislike even though the law says to like... hence it's difficult," he added.

If the jurisdiction of the courts were not clarified, the courts' time would be wasted by people who were deliberately out to create trouble, he said.

He added: "For instance, a member deliberately brings along someone who has no right to attend meetings. He knows (that it's wrong) but he keeps quiet and when he does not win, he raises the question of the meeting not being valid because a person who had no right attended the meeting.

"Hence, when there are people like that, we are only wasting the court's time with all sorts of deliberate ill-intentioned tactics."

Asked whether Umno would seek the court's interpretation on injunctions obtained by UMNO members, Dr Mahathir said: "Yes, we want to seek clarification but sometimes we have little time.

"For instance, tomorrow we are going to have the meeting, we get it (injunction) or this morning we are going to hold the meeting, the people are already seated and waiting for the meeting to begin, the lawyer comes in and says cannot. -- more

KHY AAM LDB

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"Hence, I think if the law allows this... it is difficult... the meetings cannot go on. Anyone can do anything and ask for injunction."

On whether UMNO cases recently taken to court were deliberate, he said believed there were such cases.

Asked about the possibility of UMNO divisional delegates meetings being postponed to a date later than Sept.30 the last day for such meetings, he said: "Trouble lah.

"We cannot have meetings... so many things they can do... I'm afraid that some people who have no right might attend the general assembly (of UMNO) on the sly, then claim the elections are invalid because people who had no right to attend the meetings had done so. All this can be done."

The Prime Minister, who arrived here on board the Eastern and Oriental Express luxury train, returned to Kuala Lumpur by air this evening.

Earlier, he inspected the Small- and Medium-scale Industries Information Centre at the Kedah Regional Development Authority (Keda) building where he was briefed by KEDA General Manager Mohamad Yusof Mohamad Johor and visited the Kedah branch office of the Malay Chamber of Commerce in the same building. -- Bernama

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