

Dr M tells State leaders: Don't repeat abuses of the past

Willing to lose Sabah

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KOTA KINABALU, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he did not mind losing Sabah once again if the Barisan Nasional State Government failed to fulfil its responsibilities to the people.

He said the Federal Government wanted to ensure that the new State Government was responsible and did not become like past governments in Sabah, which failed to check abuses.

"I don't mind losing Sabah to the opposition rather than have a government that is not good," he told State and Federal government officers at a meeting here.

Dr Mahathir then directed all Ministers, Assistant Ministers and government officers in Sabah to declare their properties to him and for all licences issued and government business activities to be audited to identify abuse.

"We do not want events like those of before to recur where those who are in government take it as an opportunity to become rich.

"Past governments, be they from the Alliance, BN or the opposition, all acted the same. They did not understand the concept of government too well. Many regarded it as an opportunity to become rich and neglect the people.

"They cast aside the law and regulations, including giving bribes so that people supported them.

"In time, the people became impatient and disappointed and rejected the government in power. So, this cycle repeated itself often. We do not want to perpetuate this."

He said that in the past

there were cases of government officers who became millionaires on retirement.

The Federal Government had to be firm in supervising the administration of the State to ensure it served the people.

In the past, its hands were tied because of the agreement made when Sabah joined the federation, that the state was free to supervise itself.

"When abuses occurred, the Federal Government could not do anything. But, this time, we are determined to monitor the running of the State Government in the interest of the people."

Dr Mahathir also warned that anyone who committed abuses would not escape the law.

There might be some who would feel uneasy about this firm attitude but he was confident it would be accepted by the people.

He said although the root word for government (*kerajaan*) was "raja" (ruler), the people who formed the government were *hamba* (slaves) to the people, that is, to serve the people and not their own interests.

"We are certain there had been many abuses by politicians and officials in the past. We will initiate an audit. We are keen to know the true financial situation, issuing of licenses, who got a lot ... everything will be rectified," he added.

He said the Federal Government intended to develop Sabah speedily because it has lagged far behind other States.

"The people of Sabah have long been victims of rotten politics. Mistakes occurred since way back. Now, all must strive for-

ward," he added.

Dr Mahathir urged the State Government to expedite implementation of development projects so that results would show within 100 days and the full physi-

cal development would be reality in two years.

He said the allocation of RM500 million for Sabah announced by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim recently would be

increased after the expiry of the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991-1995).

He urged federal and State government officers in the State to improve friendly relations.