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Mahathir-Law

MALAYSIA MUST PRACTICE SUITABLE LAWS, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUCHING, March 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia must practise laws and enforcement of laws suited to the situation and level of development.

As such, the country's judges should take firm action to ensure that they were not manipulated by certain quarters, he said when opening the Judges' Conference here.

He said: "It is not my intention to interfere in the judicial process but the freedom of judges is the same as that for others, it is limited.

"There is no need for judges to be popular like politicians who require the support of the masses."

He also said that judges must discharge their duties without fear or favour.

"Judges are also subjected to the law and cannot pass sentence as they like.

"If the law limits the sentence to only this much, surely the judges will not pass a sentence that exceeds the fixed limit," he said.

In some western countries the concept of justice had changed a lot, he said, adding that to protect the individual rights, the rights of society were ignored.

He drew attention to the damages awarded by the courts which he said had risen to such an extent as to cause problems to society.

"For example, damages for physical or mental injuries caused by accidents are assessed at millions of dollars.

"Maybe this is considered as sympathising with the victims but as a result the insurance premiums increase manifold and medical costs also spiral," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this in turn would burden the poor who could not afford high premiums and medical costs.

For Malaysia, he said, the individual rights and the rights of the majority must be given equal consideration.

"For us this is justice. Any assessment that favours any party, poor or rich, cannot be considered fair," he said. -- Bernama

FL JK