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DAP WANTS PM TO CONSULT WITH OPPOSITION ON HARUN'S REPLACEMENT

KUALA LUMPUR, June 5 (Bernama) -- The DAP today called on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to consult with the Opposition before appointing the new Election Commission (EC) chairman to replace outgoing Datuk Harun Din.

Its secretary-general, Lim Kit Siang, said the commission was one of the most important institutions to ensure the conduct of free, fair and clean general elections without which there would be no meaningful parliamentary democracy in the country.

"The time has come for the development of Constitutional conventions to uphold the spirit and letter of the Constitution," he said in a statement, here.

Harun is due to retire on June 21 after nine years as head of the election body.

Dr Mahathir told reporters yesterday that the government had identified several candidates to replace Harun and an announcement would be made once the person was picked.

Lim said Harun had been very approachable as the commission chairman and had tried his level best to conduct fair elections.

"Unfortunately, his hands are tied under existing laws and regulations which are not conducive to the holding of free, fair and clean general elections," he said.

He said the EC has never been able to exercise its constitutional independence to determine the polling date and the length of the election campaign period.

-- BERNAMA

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