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Mahathir-Judges

JUDICIARY MUST ALSO ABIDE BY RULES, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KOTA KINABALU, July 30 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government will not interfere with the judiciary but wishes to see that the judiciary operates according to rules and laws.

"In this country of ours judges are independent. We do not try to influence judges and upon their appointment they are independent in discharging their duties.

"We are only responsible for as far as their appointment. However, while they are independent, they are still subject to rules and laws," Dr Mahathir said at a thanksgiving with the people here for the Barisan Nasional (BN)'s victory in the recent by-election for the Likas state seat.

He said the country's judiciary would have a dented image if judgments for cases were influenced by certain situations outside of the cases being heard.

"A judge should not think that, since there is no appeal against a case being heard by him, a judgment can be made in the belief that there will be no appeal against his judgment," he said.

"If decision is made solely because there is no appeal against a judgment, then the image of the Malaysian judiciary will be eroded.

"Although they have full powers, these powers should be used wisely and orderly and according to the laws of the country," said the prime minister.

Specifically referring to a court judgment that led to the by-election for the Likas state seat, the prime minister said that in the past all courts accepted electoral rolls verified by the Election Commission.

"Somehow when there was this petition against the BN's victory in Likas (in the 1999 state election), all of a sudden the court itself wanted to review the roll whereas this was never done by the other courts," he said.

Describing the action as strange, Dr Mahathir said matters that had nothing to do at all with the case being heard were also included in the judgment.

He added that the people were increasingly vocal about the judiciary but as far as possible, the government would not meddle in its affairs.

-- BERNAMA

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