

Factors that ensure good governance

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LIFE, liberty and property cannot be protected unless the conditions that promote wars, and communal, racial or religious riots are neutralised, Universiti Teknologi Mara assistant vice-chancellor (Special Functions and Laws) Prof Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi said.

He said in addition to preventing conflict and ensuring peace, good governance includes tackling poverty, effective public sector management and controlling the private sector without crippling it.

Speaking yesterday to participants to the Mahathir Dialogue On the Advancement of the Ummah — at Cyberview Lodge, Cyberjaya, he spoke on basic features of the Malaysian Constitution and ideas on democracy and good governance.

“Malaysia has a commendable record in this area as its religious, ethnic and linguistic minorities live in peace and harmony in a way that has few parallels in the world,” he said.

No Government, he said, could claim success if it was unable to ensure its population enjoyed the freedom to live without fear.

He said Governments need to beware of the private sector’s greed and to try and enforce some controls on “casino capitalism”.

“If good corporate governance can be encouraged, that will protect con-

sumers, improve standards in business, encourage foreign investment and lead to improved performance by companies,” he said.

Other principles necessary for good governance are good leadership, proper hierarchies and organisational structures, participatory democracy and developing human capital.

Shad also spoke on issues relating to the Federal Constitution, such as the parliamentary government, electoral democracy and the division of legislative, executive and judicial,

and financial powers between the Federal system and the States.

In the case of Terengganu introducing Pas hudud, he said, State Governments only had the powers to enact Islamic laws that were not included in the Federal list.

“Criminal law is in Federal hands. State assemblies are increasingly treating Islamic laws as if the entire field were theirs.

“We must wait and see how the courts will decide.”

He said although there was a degree of restraint in the mainstream Press, books and journals were abound with plenty of information on political and economic issues.

Shad later answered questions from participants on Malaysia’s Conference of Rulers, the line drawn between State and Federal powers, the media and *adat* law.

Eighteen prominent scholars and representatives of Muslim communities of North America and Europe are attending the dialogue to discuss issues of concern to Muslims.

The dialogue is organised by the Institute of Knowledge Advancement (InKA) of Universiti Teknologi Mara, together with the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations of the Prime Minister’s Department.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will moderate the session today.