

PM: Kelantanese potential untapped

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'They have the capability to administer state'

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KOTA BARU: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in his last visit to Kelantan before he steps down as Prime Minister next month, said he was saddened that the brilliant Kelantanese could not govern their own state although they had the potential to become good administrators.

He said Kelantanese Malays had all the capabilities required to run the state because they had excellent administration and business skills.

"In my office, almost all the top posts had been swamped by Kelantanese people and I think this is because they cannot secure any jobs in Kelantan.

"The Kelantanese people are industrious and capable and it saddens me to see that they are unable to explore their fullest potential in their own state," he said after a brief meeting with the Kelantan Umno liaison committee members here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Umno president, said Kelantan Umno's best asset was to capitalise on PAS' weaknesses.

He added that PAS had many weaknesses like making promises and not keeping them, lack of issues and being unsure of what type of Islamic government they wanted.

"The world recognises Malaysia not only as an Islamic government but also as a model to other Islamic countries.

"But PAS has its own interpretation and Sheikh Azhar is not as great as Abdul Hadi (Terengganu Menteri Besar and PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang) and maybe Hadi can become a *khalifah dunia* (Islamic world leader)," he added.

Dr Mahathir was apparently referring to Abdul Hadi's statement on Sept 10 which disputed the authority of Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar Dr Mohammad Sayed Tantawi who said Malaysia is an Islamic state.

On PAS' intention to set up its own university, Dr Mahathir said he was sceptical that PAS could achieve it as they were devoid of any morals.

"How can you trust a person who prays to a *tuhan samseng* (hoodlum god) and condones someone like Shahnnon Ahmad who likes to curse?

"In the end, the university will churn out students who like to curse and swear ... they do not have any moral standing," he said.

Later at a "leader with the people" gathering and dinner with about 15,000 members of the federal civil service and the Kelantan government, *Bernama* reported that Dr Mahathir expressed appreciation for their professional attitude in giving their support to ensure the success of the Federal Government's policies in developing the country.

"I am grateful because this had made it easier for me to discharge my duties throughout my term as Prime Minister," he added.