

PM: Sack corrupt and laid-back councillors

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PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has once again called for the sacking of corrupt, inefficient and non-performing local councillors to prevent them from tarnishing the image of the whole government.

However, he said, he was not in favour of the posts being made elected ones as that would only drag local councils into general politics.

What should be done instead, he said, was for the appointment to be made based on merit and that close monitoring was carried out to ensure that those appointed were effective and performed their duties well.

"If through election, those contesting will be from political parties. It will be all about general politics.

"Nobody will be interested about services and problems with drains," he told reporters after attending the Finance Ministry's monthly gathering yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said the involvement of political parties in local councils should also be reviewed and state governments should co-operate closely with the Federal Government in enhancing the quality of services provided by local governments.

He said that in this way action could be taken against inefficient councillors and those not willing to carry out their duties, including collecting taxes, for fear of losing their popularity.

"These people don't realise that by doing so, in the long run, they are damaging the image and popularity of the government with their corrupt and inefficient ways.

"That's why I say that if they don't perform, they should be removed," he added.

On collection of income tax, Customs and Excise duties and road tax, he said Malaysia fared better than many other countries, including some developed nations, because of its efficient method of collecting revenue.

Many countries, he said, were still facing problems in doing so due to various obstacles, including graft and tax evasion.

"Of course we have the same problem here, but if there are problems with abuse of power and corruption, we just have to tackle them.

"I don't believe that there is a country in this world that doesn't face the same problems.

"What is important is that our performance is better than most countries, including developed ones," he added.

He said that even tougher legislations would not be able to fully solve such problems because people would somehow find loopholes to exploit.