

07 FEB 2003

Mahathir-Justice

CASES DELAYED MAY NOT BE PRESIDED OVER PROPERLY, SAYS PM

PUTRAJAYA, Feb 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that cases delayed for a long time cannot be presided over properly.

He said that a long delay would mean that witnesses could forget the facts while there could be some who may no longer be alive.

"We've read of instances where court cases have dragged on for up to seven years. We know that cases cannot be presided over properly as witnesses may forget and some may no longer be alive. That's the problem," he said when asked on the delay of the disposal of cases in the country.

He earlier launched e-Syariah, the seventh flagship application under the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project. It is an integrated case management system covering the various aspects in the handling of Syariah Court cases.

Dr Mahathir said that the e-Syariah could help expedite the Syariah Court processes.

The Prime Minister also said that all the states should have their respective syariah laws gazetted to ensure uniformity.

Asked whether a decision has been made on the appointment of a woman Syariah Court judge, he said that a decision had not been made "because they are doubts as to whether a woman can become a judge or not."

On why the Syariah laws have been placed under the jurisdiction of the state government, he said: "The problem is that under the constitution, the matter of religion is outside the authority of the federal government...under the state governments (or) more precisely, it's a matter that is a responsibility of the rulers."

Asked to comment on judges who make negative comments pertaining to the law of the country in their judgments, he said that there was a line drawn between the Legislature, Executive and the Judiciary.

"If we were to breach this and fail to honour this division, then the other parties will also commit this breach and the authorities may even interfere in the judicial proceedings and things like that.

"That is why it is most vital that we uphold this division. Let the Legislature determines the laws. If the laws are not good, the people will demand that they are changed. That's the system in a democracy, but if judges do not apply the law as it is, then of course the whole system will break down," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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