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Dr Mahathir supports PM's tough stance on corruption

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. \_ Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has come out in support of his successor Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's tough stance against corruption and the way he has tackled the thorny issue so far.

"Corruption is an ongoing thing, but the present Government has shown greater interest in eradicating the crime," the former Prime Minister said after opening the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) in Kuala Lumpur today.

Abdullah, since taking office as the country's fifth Prime Minister last year, has come down hard on corruption and urged a speedy resolution to investigation of cases that have been pending for some time.

Last month, a Government Minister and a senior corporate figure were charged with corruption. The Prime Minister has also goaded the civil service to buck up and provide better service to the public.

On Pas' "personal attack" campaign against Abdullah recently, Dr Mahathir said the party had run out of issues to exploit.

Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang recently said the Prime Minister was only playing to the gallery by leading prayers during the fasting month for political gain.

Dr Mahathir recently expressed confidence that the Barisan Nasional would be returned to power with a two-thirds majority in the elections and perform "better than in 1999".

He said the BN's chances in Opposition-held States Terengganu and Kelantan were "good", as the people were no longer disgruntled over the 1998 sacking of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Dr Mahathir also defended the Government's stand on Islam, saying it was as basic and fundamental as what the religion promotes.

The IAMM, the brainchild of Dr Mahathir, provides services in the conservation and restoration of artefacts for the museum's collection as well as for its clients' items.

Covering over 1,100 square metres, the RM25 million conservation centre is funded by the Albukhary Foundation.

Also present were the museum's director Syed Mohamad Albukhary and his brother, Albukhary Foundation executive chairman Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Albukhary.