

Dr Mahathir insists ISA a 'good law'
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By Aidila Razak

As the Dewan Rakyat debates the replacement law for the Internal Security Act (ISA), former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad remains convinced that it is a "good law".

mahathir ebook launching 091211 04 "We had the ISA because certain things had upset the stability of the country.

"It is not a bad law, but a good one which could curb potential threats," he told reporters in Kuala Lumpur today.

Mahathir (right), who has chalked several crackdowns under his premiership, added that the problem was not the law but the implementation.

To support his argument, Mahathir said the US which had criticised the ISA, now has a law which is "worse than the ISA".

"They allow detention without trial in Guantanamo Bay, for even up to 10 years and allow torture."

However, when asked how he feels the new replacement law will fare in curbing security threats, he replied: "I have not studied it yet."

In 1987 the government under Mahathir executed the notorious Operation Lalang that saw 106 citizens detained under ISA, including opposition leaders Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh as well as civil rights activists such as Kua Kia Soong.

In a recent book about the leader, however, the long-running former PM had denied he was behind the swoop and blamed the police.

Gov't should not pay for rich students

Meanwhile, on the ongoing debate over free tertiary education, the former prime minister said that abolishing the PTPTN (National Higher Education Fund) will place a greater burden on the country's economy.

"If you abolish the PTPTN, you'll have to introduce something else which will be more costly because it would mean free education which even the rich can enjoy," he said.

He reiterated that the objective of PTPTN is to help the underprivileged obtain tertiary education and not for those who can afford it.

dataran sit in PTPTN. "If the students don't like it then they don't have to take the loans, and those who support the abolition of PTPTN can support the students (in their studies)," he said.

On Saturday hundreds of students marched down the streets of Kuala Lumpur to demand free tertiary education while a smaller group had pitched tents at Dataran Merdeka to "occupy" the iconic square until their demands are heard.

The KL City Council (DBKL), however, contended the students were in violation of its by laws and its enforcement officers attempted to dismantle the tents, resulting in a scuffle on Sunday.

The students have regrouped and are continuing to face DBKL officers who are adamant that they leave

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