

Dr M: Maybe we can have 'orang putih' PM, too
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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad continued with his sarcasm today over the government's move to appoint a German to head ailing Malaysia Airlines (MAS), suggesting that perhaps the prime minister too can be a white man (orang putih).

"I am worried. If we do not believe in ourselves, one day, when we need a prime minister, we can get a white man because he is 'smarter' than us.

"If people want to get angry, so be it, that's my opinion," Mahathir told journalists at a press conference in Putrajaya this morning.

Last Sunday, Mahathir called Malaysians "stupid" after the government resorted to hiring Christoph Mueller (right) as MAS chief executive officer.

Mueller currently leads Aer Lingus, Ireland's national carrier.

'Putrajaya makes us look stupid'

However, Mahathir clarified today that he did not mean by his remarks that Malaysians were less intelligent.

Instead, he said, Putrajaya's move to appoint to a foreigner to head the top job in MAS made Malaysians look stupid.

"When we need consultants, we hire foreigners, when we need directors, we hire foreigners, it looks as if we are admitting that we are stupid," he said.

Yesterday, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng (left) rebutted Mahathir, saying that it was the BN government, not Malaysians, that was "stupid" and this has led to the ailing fortunes of MAS.

Responding to this, Mahathir said the government must not think that Malaysians are not talented.

"If we do not believe in our own abilities, then don't become government," he said.

From Malaysia Boleh to Malaysia Bodoh

Separately, PAS information chief Mahfuz Omar questioned if Mueller's appointment means that a foreigner will be appointed to helm the Finance Ministry since Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has failed in this role.

The Pokok Sena MP said the appointment proved that the BN government had failed in realising the "Malaysia Boleh" slogan.

"Malaysia boleh can be changed to 'Malaysia bodoh' just like (former premier) Dr Mahathir Mohamad's cynical comment that Malaysians are stupid and not fit to helm MAS," he added in a statement.

He also said it was strange how those who were involved in MAS' problem now were given the responsibility to recover the ailing company, citing Idris Jala and Azman Mokhtar

"By right, foreigners who are more capable should replace them," said the PAS information chief.

"Does this mean the government is considering giving the Finance Ministry portfolio to a foreigner who will be able to improve the country's economy as the prime minister has failed to do so?" he asked.

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