

Mahathir eyes external audit on gov't spending
MalaysiaKini.com
Jan 29, 2015

Former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad believes the federal government should have external auditors monitoring its spending.

In a blog posting today, Mahathir said Malaysia has larger wealth now and more money is being spent by both the federal government and its various agencies.

"We see entities such as Federal Land Development Authority (Felda), Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and Tabung Haji spending billions in acquiring foreign properties while others such as Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd and Petronas have bought shares in airports and Canadian ventures, also involving huge sums of money.

"An outside audit by a good auditing firm appointed by an independent body not connected with the companies to be audited will help allay the suspicions and worries of the public.

"The audit firms should be beholden only to the independent body as well as be paid by them. Government and its agencies should have no say at all," wrote Mahathir, who was also once finance minister.

Mahathir also suggested that the people be allowed to testify or provide information to the auditors, with their identities being safeguarded.

'Proper audit will clear government's name'

"With a proper audit by reputable auditors, the cleanliness of the management of public funds should be established. The government's name would be cleared," he said.

Although Mahathir did not cite any examples of such audit being conducted during his 22-year tenure as prime minister, Putrajaya, under the Abdullah Ahmad Badawi administration, did appoint Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PWC) to audit the Port Klang Free Zone project in 2009.

The PWC report exposed various irregularities and cost-overruns, running into billions of ringgit, which must be paid through public coffers.

Incidentally, the PKFZ project was conceived during Mahathir's administration.

More recently, there has been intense scrutiny over Felda, EPF, Tabung Haji and 1MDB's choice of investments.

Mahathir is among one of the staunchest critics of 1MDB's ventures, as the state body has amassed a huge RM41 billion debt and even parks money abroad.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak chairs 1MDB's advisory board.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/287675>