

Late Agong wanted Salleh Abas sacked, says Dr M

MalaysiaKini.com

Jun 13, 2015

By Nigel Aw

Dr Mahathir Mohamad claimed that he had to take the blame for former lord president of the Supreme Court Salleh Abas' sacking in 1988.

Speaking at an event in Kuala Lumpur, the former premier said the late Sultan of Johor Sultan Iskandar Sultan Ismail, who was the Yang-diPertuan Agong then, had an axe to grind with Salleh.

This, he added, was because Salleh (photo) had complained that the Agong was "making too much noise and disturbing his home", and copied the letter to all the sultans.

"The Johor sultan never liked Salleh. He (Salleh) wrote a letter complaining about noise coming from his (Sultan's) house.

"That was wrong. As a senior person, you can go see the Agong directly... but Salleh wrote the letter and copied it to every sultan.

"The Johor Sultan, who was the Agong, was annoyed and said this is the wrong thing to do, and he asked me to dismiss Salleh," said Mahathir at The Cooler Lumpur Festival 2015, themed "My Most Dangerous Idea".

Mahathir said he brought the matter up with the Cabinet but it decided that Salleh cannot be arbitrarily dismissed.

"You cannot dismiss just like that. There needs to be a tribunal and I told the Agong this; he said okay, we will set up the tribunal," he added.

Dr M made the 'principal complainant'

However, Mahathir said when the tribunal was finally set up, the attorney-general at that time made him the 'principal complainant'.

"He did not want to mention the Agong's name in the tribunal so he said it was me, that I wanted Salleh to be dismissed.

"He used speeches made by Salleh against me which I did not know about to show the tribunal that Salleh was against me and it was me who decided he should be dismissed," he added.

Mahathir was quizzed about his role in undermining the country's judiciary.

Salleh's sacking in 1988 was widely seen as a retaliation by Mahathir for a court ruling

which deregistered Umno as a political party.

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