

Consider lifestyle evidence in bribery cases, Dr M tells court

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Kow Gah Chie

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the evidence of a person's lavish lifestyle should be taken into account by the courts when hearing corruption cases.

Corruption can be detected through lifestyle because people who are involved in bribery would spend the money, he added.

“When they spent money, the things they buy become very physical. That’s where you can detect corruption,” he said, referring to cases where the people live beyond their means.

Unfortunately, he added, the courts wanted to see somebody turn up to testify and say bribery did take place.

“But the court should allow the evidence of lavish lifestyle,” he said at Malaysia’s War On Corruption symposium.

Mahathir said Malaysians are tolerant toward a corrupt top leader, but not against the corruption happening in the low and middle ground.

In his 40-minutes keynote address, Mahathir mentioned two categories of corruption - ‘under the table corruption’ and ‘above the table corruption’.

According to him, Malaysia is halfway and heading toward the ‘above the table corruption’ and is very close to having institutional corruption.

When the top person in the government is compromised, the grassroots would be corrupt as well, he said.

“To get rid of this, we need to have a leader who is free of corruption, we should instil the value system that corruption is a sin in our education system,” he said.

Mahathir also suggested crowd funding as a model for the political parties to garner political funding, which is currently used by US President Barack Obama.

“Obama only sought small amounts of money to be put into his bank account through crowd funding, instead of getting the funding from multinational companies,” he said.

In this way, the leader is not obliged to give a minister post or ‘Tan Sri’ title in exchange, he said.

“Crowd funding is a good system,” he noted.

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