

Choosing 'Parachute' Candidates Should Continue, Says Dr M
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KUALA SELANGOR -- Barisan Nasional (BN) component party leaders should continue choosing "parachute" candidates from among the highly educated and professionally experienced as the practice is still suitable in the current political scenario.

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said such individuals would be capable of carrying out the tasks given, effectively, especially in making government administration smoother.

"We still need 'parachute' candidates; we cannot reject the practice. When I was prime minister, Daim Zainuddin (former finance minister) was made a parachute candidate as we were aware of his capability."

Dr Mahathir said this when replying to a question from Tambun Tulang assemblyman and former Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim after giving a talk on "The Role and Challenges of Elected Representatives" at the Kuala Selangor Umno Division Hall yesterday, in conjunction with the three-day retreat for BN assemblymen in Selangor.

Shahidan had asked for the former premier's opinion on whether the system of choosing "parachute" candidates should remain or discontinued.

Dr Mahathir said Idris Jala, the former chief executive officer and managing director of Malaysia Airlines, was appointed Minister in the Prime Minister's Department although he was not a politician because he was seen as capable of assisting the government administer the country.

However, he said, choosing "parachute" candidates should not be done too often as it could have a negative impact on the government.

Dr Mahathir also reminded BN elected representatives to take care of their image in order to win the people's hearts.

"They should not be chasing wealth, but to live moderately and serve the people well.

"Many of today's young people reject BN because they tend to link BN leaders to corruption. That is why I want all BN elected reps to safeguard their image if they want BN to win the next general election," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there had been independent elected reps who could win the elections because of their good service record and not because of their background.

(Bernama)