

Parties 'cashing in' on Dr M's sentiments

• By Farrah Naz Karim
farrah@nst.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Parties with vested interests are said to be cashing in on former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's sentiments to pursue their own causes.

Umno Youth chief Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said not only Dr Mahathir's business friends but others, as well, were taking advantage of the situation.

"By fanning sentiments and sensationalising issues, they hope to gain. They will not succeed even if they take advantage of other people, be it for their business or personal interests.

"They have preconditions and their personal interests are at stake. But at the end of the day, they will not succeed in attaining their causes as it is always the party and the Government that prevail."

Hishammuddin said the Government, by way of thoroughly explaining to the people issues raised by Dr Mahathir, would quash such opportunism.

He said the Government realised that ultimately, it was the people who decided on the position of an elected Government. That, he said, was why the Cabinet decided to enlighten the people on the Government's directions and their rationales.

The true test of the Government's, credibility, he said, would be the success of the Ninth Malaysia Plan currently underway.

"We will make sure that a thorough explanation be made to those willing to listen.

"However, we can only do so much. We can't expect those not interested to accept our explanations... that is beyond our control," said Hisham-

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muddin, who is Education Minister, after his ministry's post-Cabinet meeting here yesterday.

He also noted that Umno Youth deputy Khairy Jamaluddin had also been the target of "wild attacks".

He slammed Dr Mahathir's former political secretary Matthias Chang, who lobbed potshots at him and several other ministers for speaking out against Dr Mahathir, whom Chang described as a "Malay hero".



Chang had declared: "I spit in the faces of those Malays who show disrespect for this Malay hero".

Hishammuddin said he had told Khairy to refrain from responding although it was not easy to ignore the allegations.

"It is always the interests of the nation and party that come first."

Hishammuddin said he did not expect Dr Mahathir to desist from questioning the Government and Umno.

"The Government will an-

swer his queries, but that will not satisfy him. He will just raise many more issues.

"I am personally disappointed that even after slogging at the Education Ministry for over two years, I'm still, like he said, part of a 'half-past-six' Government."

Hishammuddin said he could not accept Dr Mahathir's alliance with the Opposition, and that the former prime minister's attacks on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi were unfair.