

DATE: 14/04/2008

DAP duo on the scandalous mess left 'by a joker'

NST- 14/4/2008.

■ By Lee Shi-lan and
Melissa Darlyne Chow
news@nst.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Puchong MP Gobind Singh Deo yesterday accused former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad of damaging the country's democratic process and the independence of the judiciary.

In a statement, Gobind slammed Dr Mahathir's son, Jernun member of parliament Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir, for springing to his father's defence before evaluating the facts.

Dr Mahathir "used emergency laws to suppress political dissent and incarcerate those who opposed him", Gobind, the son of DAP chairman and Bukit Gelugor MP Karpal Singh, said.

"Restrictions, mainly political, were placed on the freedom of the press. He condoned an electoral system which was highly questionable and disadvantageous to his opponents.

"Dr Mahathir built the current Umno and Barisan Nasional political mindset, which thrives on political patronage to succeed rather than that of time-honoured and traditional political support," he said.

"Does Mukhriz support the use of the Internal Security Act to suppress political dissent, political restrictions on freedom of the press, a judiciary which is not independent, politics of patronage or a questionable electoral process?"

Gobind said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had the "nasty task" of having to clean up the "scandalous mess" left by Dr Mahathir.

He said Abdullah's independent decisions marked the start of Dr Mahathir's "bashing of the PM".

"This simply demonstrates the type of dictator that Dr Mahathir is. He wants his way even after retirement.

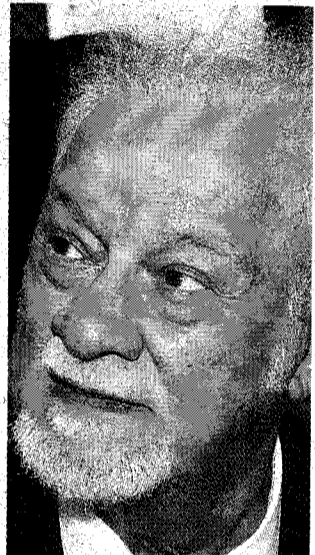
"The scandalous mess created by Dr Mahathir came to a boil with shocking revelations during the Lingam Royal Commission hearing."

He said the turmoil in BN was largely due to what Dr Mahathir had done during his tenure as prime minister.

He described Mukhriz's



Gobind Singh Deo says Tun Dr Mahathir wants his way even after retirement



Karpal Singh says it cannot be denied that Abdullah is the prime minister as of right

"conspiracy theory" — in which the opposition is said to support Abdullah because he was a weak leader — as laughable.

It was not Abdullah's weaknesses but that of Dr Mahathir which should worry Mukhriz, he said.

These weaknesses would be exposed and capitalised on by right thinking Malaysians from now until the next general election.

Gobind's parting remark to Mukhriz was: "If you do not have the guts to recognise the severe shortcomings of the previous administration and the tragic effect it has had on the present regime, perhaps you should just remain silent and let those who dare to speak on your behalf."

In George Town, Karpal urged Mukhriz to advise his father to retire in grace and dignity.

He said it was useless for Dr Mahathir to keep criticising Abdullah.

"Everyone has weaknesses and strengths. Abdullah has weaknesses but he also has his strengths.

"What cannot be denied is that he is the prime minister as of right.

"This mandate was given to him in the recent general election by the rakyat."

Karpal said everyone, including Dr Mahathir, must respect that mandate.

"No doubt, BN secured only

50.3 per cent of the popular vote, but a win is a win, and it must be respected by all, including Dr Mahathir."

Karpal said Dr Mahathir also had his strengths and weaknesses when he was prime minister, but maintained that his strengths were subdued by his weaknesses.

"People also cannot forget the manner in which Dr Mahathir single-handedly destroyed the judiciary and neither can the people forget *Operasi Lalang* initiated by Dr Mahathir, resulting in the unfair and cruel incarceration of 106 citizens, including his political opponents, trade unionists, journalists, Chinese educationists and church workers."

Karpal, in response to comments made by Mukhriz that he (Karpal) was worse than a joker, clarified that the remark that Dr Mahathir was a joker was based on the latter's own statement.

Dr Mahathir had quoted Shakespeare, "Let us kill all the lawyers" at a cabinet meeting, which he said was a joke.

"In a meet-the-students session in London, Dr Mahathir said 'I've a private wish to hang all errant lawyers, especially Karpal Singh'," Karpal said.

"If this utterance was also a joke, then we clearly had a joker for a prime minister until Abdullah took over."