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'Sultan made right move'

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He has good reason to choose his own MB, says Mahathir

KUALA LUMPUR: The Sultan of Terengganu made the right move in choosing his own Menteri Besar and has "good reason" to do so, said former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

On why he wrote the letter to the media on the role of the Rulers and the situation in Terengganu, Dr Mahathir said he wanted to allay any doubts as there were a lot of confusion and worry regarding the role played by the Rulers.

"My hope is that those who questioned what the Sultan did can understand his actions. He does not deliberately take action. He has good reason," he told reporters last night.

Dr Mahathir said that if the assemblymen felt what the Sultan

did was wrong then they could table a motion of no-confidence.

The state's Regency Advisory Council had chosen Kijal assemblyman Datuk Ahmad Said to be Terengganu's Menteri Besar instead of Barisan Nasional's choice, Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh.

The decision sparked outcry among 23 state assemblymen who supported Idris. On Thursday, Barisan chairman Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced that the coalition would back Ahmad Said.

Dr Mahathir also agreed that the post of Umno president and deputy president should be contested if that was what party members wanted.

Earlier, DAP's Ipoh Timor MP

Lim Kit Siang called for a public inquiry into the expenditure of billions of ringgit in petroleum royalty or *Wang Ehsan* in Terengganu in the past seven years.

He said he supported the call by Dr Mahathir that the Federal Government must investigate to clear its name.

"(Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Abdullah (Ahmad Badawi) should take up the challenge to institute a public inquiry on accountability and integrity of expenditures of several billions of ringgit of 'black gold' through *Wang Ehsan* in Terengganu," Lim said in a statement yesterday.

In 2000, the oil royalty for Terengganu was converted to *Wang Ehsan* after PAS won the

state in 1999.

In his letter to a local daily, Dr Mahathir had said that since 2004, when Barisan Nasional recaptured the state, "all kinds of projects have been developed in Terengganu. Some of these projects are very good but many are totally wasteful."

"This is not good for a Government keen to abolish corruption and be transparent. To clear its name, an investigation should be made," Dr Mahathir had written.