

THE STAR

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Dr M: Nik Aziz failed

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He is responsible for Kelantan's backwardness, says ex-PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat should be made responsible for the backwardness of the state, said former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed.

"To a certain extent, he is responsible for the backwardness of Kelantan. He has to accept this. In other countries, people resign if they can't deliver," he said in response to a question posed about the leadership of Nik Aziz.

Dr Mahathir spoke to reporters after opening the Corporate

Governance Summit 2009 yesterday entitled "Truth, Lies and Corporate Governance".

His statement came on the heels of a recent call by Pasir Mas MP Datuk Ibrahim Ali asking Nik Aziz to step down as Menteri Besar for failing to bring development to the state.

Nik Aziz was reported to have earlier said that Ibrahim Ali should vacate the Pasir Mas seat because his actions were detrimental to PAS.

Dr Mahathir yesterday said the problem with the local political

scene was that many leaders refuse to give up their seats.

"The problem with comfortable seats is you don't want to get up at all. You just sit down," he said, adding that he stepped down after 22 years because "I think people were getting fed up with me."

On Ibrahim Ali, Mahathir said the country needed more leaders like him.

"We need someone like that who is neutral and concerned only with good governance, and who will criticise anybody, whether it's the

Government or opposition," he said.

Meanwhile, in Pasir Mas, a local Malay non-governmental organisation based here challenged Kelantan PAS to vacate the Tendong state seat to enable independent Pasir Mas MP Datuk Ibrahim Ali to contest against Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat.

Pasir Mas Citizens Watch Service Centre deputy president Mohd Sapani Zakaria said Nik Aziz should contest for the seat and prove that Ibrahim had lost the support of the constituents.