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Opposition's job is to say bad and unpopular things, says Dr M

Doctor again: The Queen, Tuanku Nur Zahirah, as UMT chancellor awarding an honorary doctorate to Dr Mahathir in Kuala Terengganu yesterday. - Bernama



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KUALA TERENGGANU: Politicians should not get upset over Penang Chief Minister Lim Guang Eng's alleged statement that Johor is unsafe because the Opposition must make "bad and unpopular" remarks, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said he could understand Sultan of Johor Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar's anger over the matter, but insisted that politicians should not blow their top over the issue.

"The Sultan is angry and I understand it as he is the state Ruler. However, politicians should not lose their cool as the Opposition's job is to say bad and unpopular things," he told reporters after attending the Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) convocation ceremony yesterday.

He was also awarded an honorary doctorate in science.

The former prime minister was asked to comment on Lim's apology over his alleged statement that Singaporeans were likely to be kidnapped if they went to Johor.

Dr Mahathir said he himself was attacked by the Opposition, including being labelled a dictator and his online blog flooded with

negative comments.

"In my blog, *depa maki saya* (they curse me). If I were to take action (on every single attack), then I won't have time to do anything else.

"Apology or no apology, Lim only did so after being criticised by various parties," he added.

On the Kelantan PAS government's insistence on implementing hudud law in the state, Dr Mahathir said the move was just a political ploy to fish for votes.

"Hudud is a game for PAS and Islam is a game for them as well, as they know they will not form the federal government," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there were many Kelantanese who worked elsewhere.

"Thus, if PAS goes ahead with its plans, then I believe there will not be anyone left in Kelantan," he added.

On certain PAS leaders' pledge to implement hudud in the country if they win the next general election, Dr Mahathir said it could not be done as Malaysia was not a country where its population is 100% Muslim.

"PAS must be realistic as non-Muslims are very important to this country and our economy could collapse if there were no non-Muslims," he said, adding that Islam had never been the focal point of PAS' struggle.