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Newspaper	The Star
Date	23/6/2014

The Star, MONDAY 23 JUNE 2014

NATION 11

Stay away from business, Rulers told

The Star - 23/6/2014

Dr M: Sultans may end up receiving preferential treatment or be taken advantage of

KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said that the Malay Rulers should stay away from business deals as they may either receive preferential treatment or may be taken advantage of by opportunistic quarters.

Dr Mahathir was quoted by online news portal *The Mole* that allowing such activities will prove harmful to the nation and so, there was a need to speak out against it.

Insinuating that the Rulers may have overstepped their boundaries

by involving themselves in business, the former Prime Minister argued that the people must speak out when these transgressions take place.

"We have provided laws and designated our Rulers as Constitutional Monarchs. But along the way they (Rulers) do something which is not within their realms.

"They go and do something and we say nothing. They go on to do more and more until they become businessmen. They make bids for projects and of course, they are

highly respected and people don't turn them down easily," Dr Mahathir was quoted as saying.

"Other people find it difficult to do business because they cannot compete against these people. So it becomes necessary to point this out. It's very unpleasant because I respect the Rulers. They are our Rulers, but unless you put a stop to this practice, there will be other people who will want to make use of the Rulers for their own purpose."

As such, Dr Mahathir said every-

one should be reminded that previous amendments to the Constitution were done to preserve the position of the Rulers in the country and the Ruler in turn should not be involved in state administration as well as in business deals.

"I don't want anything that results in ignoring the Constitution to go on because once you ignore the Constitution, someday people will ignore provisions (for the existence) of the Malay Rulers."

In the article Dr Mahathir

explained that the move to amend the Federal Constitution in the past was done to preserve the respect for the Rulers.

"I think if we give them a bad impression, they will lose respect. So we want to preserve the respect for the Rulers: You see, because we didn't put a stop earlier, now it has gone into making it legal, making it something that is permitted legally by the government. That is stepping too much already ... we have to stop that," said Dr Mahathir.