

Newspaper	The Sun
Date	12 November 2015

Set up council of elders to guide PM, suggests Dr M

The Sun - 12/11/2015

KUALA LUMPUR: Former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday said he suggested to the G25 group of prominent Malays that a council of elders be formed to guide the prime minister in leading the country.

He said he made the suggestion as he deemed it necessary considering the Cabinet would probably give the green light to all of Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak's decisions.

"We need an outside council who will not simply nod their head to everything the prime minister says. Though he may not accept their views, at least he could consider what they say," he told a press conference after launching the Malaysian War on Corruption Symposium.

Meanwhile, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak said a council of elders to run the country as suggested by Mahathir is not provided for in the Federal Constitution and contrary to the Westminster system of government.

Salleh said Mahathir mooted the idea of a presidential council of elders in 2008.

"More than seven years later and he is still pushing for that to be implemented," he posted on his blog sskeruak.blogspot.com yesterday.

On having spoken out against the leadership, Mahathir said that he was prepared to face the consequences.

"When you stick out your neck, be prepared to have it

chopped off," he said, adding that he did not care what others thought of him and that he would continue to speak out if he felt there was something wrong.

He said this was a democratic country where freedom of speech was practised.

"I will have my say. The moment I mention the premier should be changed, it is a crime ... under which laws?" he asked.

Last Friday, police recorded Mahathir's statement at his office in Kuala Lumpur over his criticism of the prime minister.

On another issue, Mahathir said the courts should accept an individual's lavish lifestyle such as owning many luxurious cars as evidence of corruption.

"If you want to detect corruption at the highest level, look at the person's lifestyle.

The courts here should accept the evidence of lavish lifestyle as enough to reveal that someone was corrupt. This way, there will be less chances of people in high places becoming corrupt," he said.

However, he said Malaysians were very tolerant

of corrupt people in "high places", and warned that more money will be lost if this was ignored.

Asked about the relevance of the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (Jakim), Mahathir said people in a democratic country should be allowed to set up or remove any government department or agency as they wished.

"If the people want to get rid of Jakim, they can. This is a democratic country, they can even stop supporting the government. That's it," he said.

Responding to a statement by social activist Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan that she was willing to work with him if he agreed to change the country's system of government, he said his priority is to change the prime minister and not Umno and the system.

"I think unless the leadership is changed, don't expect any changes. Umno was set up to struggle for independence and was led by very good people. The problem is when corrupted members join the party to get something out of Umno," he said.

'Jakim welcomes criticisms but not extreme views'

BANGI: The Malaysia Islamic Development Department (Jakim) welcomes constructive criticisms, but not extreme views such as the suggestion for the department to be scrapped, said Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki.

He said Jakim had contributed positively to Islamic development in this country, but did not deny it

needed to accept criticisms towards overcoming weaknesses in order to improve its services.

"We have never been defensive when criticised, but to me the view that Jakim be abolished is rather extreme and if what is reported is true, it is as if to return Malaysia to 'zaman jahiliyyah' (period of ignorance)," he said.

He was commenting on a

statement by Tawfiq Ismail, eldest son of former deputy prime minister Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman, that Jakim should be scrapped as it was seen to be interfering in the private lives of the people.

He was met by reporters after he opened the Asean Community Conference themed, "Islamic Civilisation in Asean Community: Challenges and Hopes", at the

Malaysia Islamic Training Institute (Ilim), here, yesterday.

He said the issue should not be drawn out as the view did not represent the majority but came from a few individuals who did not understand the history of Islamic development in this country.

"In today's situation, Muslims have a high understanding of the Islamic religion." - Bernama



Mahathir receives a token of appreciation from Shahrin Sodhi, executive director of MeLearn Global, at the official opening of Malaysian War on Corruption Symposium in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

ASYRAF BASID/THE SUN