

# 'PM should not have the absolute power to appoint AG'

**SEREMBAN:** The appointment of the Attorney General should no longer be the absolute prerogative of the Prime Minister, says Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan.

The Umno deputy president said there has to be a more transparent and credible method to the appointment of such a position that was vested with "extraordinary" powers.

He cited an excerpt from the book by former AG Tan Sri Tommy Thomas titled *My Story: Justice in the Wilderness* on his tenure, as it had revealed just how "influential" the position was.

"Details of the events mentioned in the book goes to show just how widespread the influence of the AG and his department is in the administration of law in the country," he said in a statement.

Mohamad also said the contents of the 573-page memoir spoke volumes on the need for the government to immediately relook the method of such appointments.

"It is even more worrying when nominations come from certain individuals who are interested and through conversations with the Prime Minister as written by Tun (Dr) Mahathir (Mohamad) himself.

"The other issue is the need to separate the powers of the AG and the Public Prosecutor.

"The power to centralise everything to one individual must also be limited.

"The government may want to consider the separation of these important roles to perform different functions," he said.

Mohamad acceded that it was difficult to obtain a two-thirds majority in Parliament to amend Section 145(3) of the Federal Constitution but efforts must be made for the better enforcement and administration of the law.

Since the book launch, former premier Datuk Seri Najib Razak has sought RM10mil in damages and an apology from Thomas over allegations made against him in the tell-all memoir.

Separately, MCA said Thomas had revealed in his book that he had lobbied for the AG post by meeting with top Pakatan Harapan leaders and prominent activists.

The party's spokesman Mike Chong said Thomas had met with not just top Pakatan leaders to obtain their support if the coalition won the general election but also with the late former lord president Tun Dr Mohamed

Salleh Abas and well-known activist Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan.

Chong said Thomas had also claimed he had the support of DAP veterans Lim Kit Siang and the late Karpal Singh before the 13th General Election should the opposition win the election.

He said the revelation was enough to prove that Thomas was not a "fair political commentator but one that favoured Pakatan".

Chong also questioned how Lim knew about Thomas' appointment prior to the official announcement when he was not even a Cabinet or an executive member.

"What really is this 'legal reform' that DAP shouts about?" he said in a statement.

Chong also said the people were questioning the "non-political", "neutral" or "non-biased" status of some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) over the years.

He said they had claimed that they were fighting for "freedom, human rights and the common interests of the people, as well as calling for institutional and political reforms".

"The revelation clearly showed that the leaders or activists of well-known and respected NGOs were also involved in political games

and a 'horse-trading' culture. They are in fact Pakatan supporters who are hiding behind NGO labels to incite sentiments and to get the people's support for Pakatan.

"The book has opened the eyes of the people and changed their perception," he said.

In a separate statement, Lim said Pakatan's three component parties unanimously wanted PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to be named Prime Minister after Dr Mahathir resigned last February.

He said Pakatan made the decision after Dr Mahathir refused to continue as prime minister as well as abide by the coalition's general election manifesto.

"Pakatan's decision to support Anwar after Dr Mahathir's shocking resignation was made unanimously by DAP, PKR and Parti Amanah Negara," he said.

The Iskandar Puteri MP said a candidate from Pakatan should have been made prime minister to uphold and respect the people's mandate.

He also said Dr Mahathir had yet to assume responsibility for his blunder in resigning, even after he retained the support of the majority of Pakatan MPs.