

Dr Mahathir calls for return to rule of law

He says the govt often sets up new agencies for matters that already have a specific agency for it, without approval from the Dewan



THE government should return to the rule of law or risk chaos if it is not governed according to the Federal Constitution, said former Prime Minister (PM) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the country was built based on the Constitution which has rules that outline the power of the government and if there are laws being proposed that are in opposition to the Constitution, they cannot be approved.

Dr Mahathir accused the current government of no longer respecting the Constitution as well as laws that have been passed by Parliament.

"What we see now is a government that acts as if it has more power than the Constitution and can do anything it wants without the need to refer to the Dewan Rakyat," he said in his debate on the royal address in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said an example of this abuse is the practice of providing gifts to former PMs as a "token of appreciation" for their service when they leave the office.

"Actually there are no laws on this, but it is done based on the consideration and some of the power that a government has. There are those who agree that a gift should be given to the retiring PM as a token of appreciation for



Pic by Muhd Amin Naharul

The 2-time former PM also claimed there are many redundant govt agencies in the current govt that paid its executives exorbitant salaries

what they have done to the country.

"The present should not be too big and if we look at private companies, they also practise what is called the 'golden handshake' where someone who has steered the country into success will be given a gift, maybe a Rolex watch just to show their appreciation."

He said some gifts to former PMs have been extraordinary and much bigger than a luxury watch, although this has never been the practice by earlier administrations.

During the era of the first three PMs, Dr Mahathir said they only received a house as a gift for their contribution to the country.

"However, when we reached (Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi), we found out that the gift was worth RM70 million. This is a huge figure and is a hundred times more than the salary given to the PM in office. The RM70 million was given without any reference to the Dewan Rakyat or any laws.

"We also heard that after the sixth PM had

retired, he had written a letter to the government and requested for RM100 million. A house worth RM60 million and cash worth RM40 million," he said.

The two-time former PM also claimed there are many redundant government agencies in the current government that paid its executives exorbitant salaries.

Without naming the agencies, Dr Mahathir alleged that none of them had received approval in Parliament and their formation had bypassed the laws.

"There are decisions that were made without referring to the laws, as if the government can do anything it wants without following the rules.

"We also find that the government often sets up new agencies for matters that already have a specific agency for it and from what I know, these agencies had not received any approval from the Dewan. They are run by officers who receive exorbitant salaries and the amount had to be kept a secret," he said.

Dr Mahathir added that he had not taken a single cent from the government although he had served as the PM previously. He said in sarcasm that it may be due to his lack of contribution unlike his successors.

He also said he was offered a plot of land, which he rejected, and instead offered to buy the land instead of taking it for free.

"This is because I received more than enough when I was PM. My pay was high, RM20,000 a month and I was also given a house, several cars and even a plane. What else should be given to me after I retire. That is why I did not take a single sen," he added.

Dr Mahathir first held office from July 1981 until October 2003 and from May 2018 until March 2020.