

# Dr M's racial remarks made to divert attention, says MAICCI

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian-Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries Coalition (MAICCI) says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent playing-up of racial sentiments is a tactic to divert attention from corruption investigations on several high-profile individuals.

MAICCI president Datuk Seri N. Gobalakrishnan said the former prime minister, who led the country for more than 22 years, clearly aimed to make the Malays feel uneasy with the non-Malays.

"I challenge him to prove his statement. I feel that when the Malaysian Anti-Corruption

Commission (MACC) started taking action against the 'big guns', he wanted to create a diversion by stirring up racial tension so that he and his family won't be bothered by the investigators. He (Mahathir) is clever," he said after the MAICCI Ponggal Festival and launch of the Women Entrepreneurship programme (WES) at MAICCI House here yesterday.

Gobalakrishnan also expressed disappointment over Dr Mahathir's statement alleging that the Indian community was not entirely loyal to the country.

He added that he believed the

statement was sensitive and could potentially cause chaos and ethnic tension.

Present at the event were Deputy Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister Datuk R. Ramanan and WES chairman Hemala Sivam.

Recently, a satellite TV channel in India had an exclusive online interview with Dr Mahathir, where he claimed that Chinese and Indian Malaysians were not entirely loyal because they were still "bonded" to their country of origin.

Gobalakrishnan said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had already said that Dr Mahathir's statement was unac-

ceptable.

"This (statement from the prime minister) is very appropriate. The country's top leader has responded, so we don't need to pursue the matter because we won't gain any benefit from it," he said.

Anwar previously told the people not to entertain outdated thoughts like Dr Mahathir's, describing them as damaging to the country.

He said the insulting statement was deliberately made to divert attention from the government's national transformation efforts.

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**DATUK SERI N. GOBALAKRISHNAN**  
MAICCI president