

**Dr M: Me, I cowed the judiciary?**  
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**By REGINA LEE**

KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has refuted allegations that he had "cowed" the judiciary during his premiership.

"This is *fitnah* (slander) but I won't sue them because it's a worthless exercise; but that is to be expected of those kind of people," he said after chairing a meeting at the Muslim Welfare Organisation Malaysia (Perkim) headquarters here yesterday.

The former prime minister was referring to allegations by former Chief Justice Tun Dzaiddin Abdullah and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz that an amendment to the Federal Constitution had effectively removed the judiciary's powers.

"Nazri is ... you know, he never likes me. Let him be. It doesn't hurt me.

"Let dogs bark but mountains don't crumble," said Dr Mahathir, adding that the "baseless accusations were a result of frustrations".

"I thought a judge should know that there are no such provisions, especially with a judge who was appointed during my time.

"If I had such a provision, I would have changed a number of people, but I don't have such an authority," Dr Mahathir said.

During the 1988 judicial crisis, Tun Salleh Abas was dismissed as Lord President with five other senior judges.

Dr Mahathir had previously written in his memoirs that Salleh was sacked after he complained about noisy renovations coming from the King's private house.

"I didn't complain about Salleh; it was the Agong (King) who wanted him removed."

He also said Perkim would embark on a campaign to prevent Muslim youths from being involved in drugs by working with anti-drug groups.

Dr Mahathir said drug abuse was especially rampant among young Muslims compared to the other communities "and this can lead to crime and the spread of HIV".

He added that Perkim aimed to discipline the young through religious education campaigns.

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