

Something is rotten in Malaysia, says Dr Mahathir
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There is something "rotten" in Malaysia, and those who dare to voice out their concerns are being demonised by the government for it, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said he, too, had become a victim of false accusation simply because he had criticised the government in the past.

"Critics are being demonised by the mainstream media, by certain individuals and politicians who had lost. Critics risk their property being seized and auctioned, they may be bankrupted," wrote Dr Mahathir on his blog, chedet.cc which was uploaded this evening.

"I am now being accused of forcing the government to do the things which should not be done. And there are many more complaints about the state which would give it a rotten smell.

"But not to worry, we will get use (sic) to the smell."

Being a vocal critic of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), Dr Mahathir had met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to discuss his criticisms of the sovereign fund in December last year, sources had revealed.

However, the meeting appears to have had little effect on Najib or Putrajaya, and the country's longest serving prime minister had continued his criticism.

In his blog today, Dr Mahathir said many criticisms had reached him about Putrajaya which would suggest that there was "something rotten in the state of Malaysia".

"I hope I am permitted to detail them here in my blog. People can decide whether things are rotten or not."

He said the complaints included Putrajaya's unwillingness to pay individuals for the work they did for their government, its delays in doing business, and its propensity to withdraw contracts for no reason.

Dr Mahathir said some had complained that their project submissions were passed onto others, who would make higher bids despite having identical documents.

"Frequently the first proposer or bidder has to go through tender process. This is only right, of course. But the proposer as first bidder would find others have submitted what looked like his submission.

"Frequently he fails or has to raise his bid because the others have quoted higher

prices or lower prices as the case may be."

He said he had also heard of delays in getting approval costs, adding that the reasons were often frivolous.

"Sometimes to speed up approvals, gratification is offered. The party that offers pays and will not complain or report. It is unhealthy. You will need their services again and you may be blacklisted. Or you may find all kinds of obstacles."

Dr Mahathir said another problem was that of notices for immediate termination of permits issued long before the due date because the authorities wanted to take over the business.

"The person concern (sic) may appeal. He is going to lose money. Sometimes the appeal is not answered, the authorities cannot be met and if meeting is possible, the applicant may be told that his loss is his problem, not the concern of the authorities."

He added that sometimes development permission could not be given because some authority or powerful person wanted the land, and there was no chance for an individual to appeal.

Meanwhile, in what could be a reference to national air carrier Malaysia Airlines (MAS), Dr Mahathir said government-owned entities employing more than 1,000 workers would opt to choose a foreigner for a contract instead.

"Local companies with adequate competence are not considered for contracts because foreign companies can do the job, may be better, may be no better.

"Frequently the local companies are said to be too small to do the job. Lots of money flows out of the country."

He said that Malaysian entities preferred to invest abroad and paid that were "sometimes indefensible", causing money to flow out of the country.

"There is a need for investments at home, but that is not for local companies. Malaysians institutions with oodles of money would do better by buying foreign technology companies and bringing them home to improve our technological capacities. But there is no encouragement for doing this," he added.

Dr Mahathir also said that the government preferred to bankrupt Malaysian firms in trouble or sell them to foreigners rather than rescue them.

He said mining in Malaysia was only for foreigners and no attempts were made to add value before exporting the raw goods.

"There was once some idea about being business friendly. Not anymore. The state competes with the private sector when the private sector seems to be doing well.

"With the power conferred on the state, there is no way the private sector can win. They lose. But the states also lose simply because business is not the business of the state. Still the trend and preference is for nationalisation."

Dr Mahathir hit out at the government for killing small businesses, saying that it was not concerned with small and medium enterprises.

"Today the actual administration seems less important than the extra administrative bodies which have been set up," he added.

"This is very confusing to the public. It seems to be confusing to the administrators also. They do not seem to know what they are expected to do when policies and decisions are made by the special bodies." – February 10, 2015.

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