

People should be allowed to get rid of Jakim, says Dr Mahathir
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By Anisah Shukry

Malaysians can get rid of the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (Jakim) if they wish to do so, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today, rebutting claims that the religious authority should not be disturbed.

He said that a democratic country should be allowed to set up or remove any government departments as they wished.

"If people want to get rid of Jakim, they can get rid of it. Because this is a democratic country, they can stop supporting the government. That's all," Dr Mahathir told a press conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

However, he said that he disagreed with Tawfik Ismail's views on the matter, adding that the remark was the former deputy prime minister Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman eldest son's personal opinion.

"I don't agree with him, in fact, anybody who's a little bit off his mind would agree with Tawfik," said the country's longest-serving prime minister.

In a recent interview with The Malaysian Insider, Tawfik said Jakim should be dissolved as other institutions already existing could carry out its functions.

He also said the government should not interfere in the lives of Muslims, and that Islamisation had only crept into Malaysia under the leadership of Dr Mahathir.

However, Tawfik's statement did not go down well with Malay right-wing group Perkasa, which said that calls to abolish Jakim went against the spirit of the country, Muslims and the constitution.

Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom, the minister in charge of religious affairs, also said such views were not in line with the constitution, and that it had to be respected by everyone. – November 11, 2015.

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