

PM Dr Mahathir denies rejecting monarchy

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KUALA LUMPUR, June 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that what he was doing to the Malay Rulers earlier did not mean that he rejected the royal institution.

On the other hand, he said, what was being done including the drafting of a law to set up a Special Court for the Rulers, was merely to avoid the Rulers from incurring the anger of the people to the extent of causing the people to revolt.

"We have to take care, the Rulers must not be involved in activities that the people do not like. The people do not have the power, but if they are angry, they will revolt. Do not let this happen.

"So we have to avoid the Rulers, with their power, from being tainted. I am not rejecting the Rulers but I believe that if the Ruler does something wrong, we should take action which is to save the Ruler.

"Like we have a law that we formulate so that a court specifically for the Rulers is set up," he said as quoted in the newspaper Sinar Harian today.

Dr Mahathir, in an exclusive interview with Sinar Harian at the Perdana Leadership Foundation, said this when asked on his efforts to ensure cordial relationships between the Rulers, national administrators and the people.

In 1993, the Parliament had amended Article 182 of the Federal Constitution pertaining to immunity for the Malay Rulers. Through the amendment, a Special Court for the Rulers was set up and came into effect on March 30, 1993.

Regarding the delay in the Swearing-in for the Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir explained that the Rulers must adhere to the country's laws and Constitution.

"Such things should not have happened. We have the law. We have the Constitution. We must obey the law. We want to return to 'the rule of law'. When something happens outside the law, it will create anger.

"But I feel the Rulers are aware because many Rulers have endeavoured so that all of them and the Agong comply with the law.

"Actually, a majority of the Rulers do not agree if the appointment is delayed. Some of them came to see me, some of them tried to ease the situation, including the delay in my swearing-in and the question of appointing the Attorney-General. And these had been resolved on the advice of the Rulers themselves," he said as quoted in the newspaper.

On his meeting with the UMNO acting president, Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi who met him recently, it was to seek his advice on what had transpired in UMNO to the extent that the party was rejected in the 14th General Election (GE14) recently.

"He (Zahid) wanted to know how to manage UMNO. So I told him clearly that UMNO had betrayed the Malays. I reminded him that we had set up UMNO to help the Malays, but now UMNO had changed and gave priority to self-enrichment.

"That is why UMNO is hated now. It is difficult for UMNO to be revived. Previously, it was looked at with respect but now with disgust," he said as quoted by the newspaper.

The meeting was the first official meeting between Ahmad Zahid and Dr Mahathir after the Barisan Nasional (BN) lost in the GE14 recently.

According to the newspaper further, Dr Mahathir when asked what advice was given to Ahmad Zahid concerning the meeting, he said; "I told him to think about what I had said."

When asked whether Ahmad Zahid had met him to join the Pakatan Harapan, Dr Mahathir merely laughed.

"We don't see anyone at all would join Pakatan Harapan especially Bersatu. If the people concerned are politicians, they would need to sever ties with their respective party, to be independent and pledge their support for the government," he was quoted by the newspaper.

In the GE14 recently, BN won 79 of the Parliamentary seats out of the 222 seats contested.

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