

## **Dr M defends CEP over summoning of judges**

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TOKYO, June 12 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has come to defence of the Council of Eminent Persons (CEP) for reportedly summoning judges recently.

Speaking to the Malaysian media at the conclusion of his three-day working visit to Japan here Tuesday, the Malaysian prime minister said he did not think that CEP had overstepped its boundaries.

"I don't think so. They have the right to talk to a lot of people who are today innocent because they haven't been charged. But they can give information that will lead to our taking action against a lot of people

"If you can't talk to them (CEP), you can't suggest to them what is good for them, then the whole Eminent Persons group should be disbanded," he said.

It was reported that CEP chairman Tun Daim Zainuddin had come under fire for allegedly summoning Chief Justice Tan Sri Md Raus Sharif and Court of Appeal president Tan Sri Zulkefli Ahmad Makinudin to a meeting, where he demanded that they resign.

Dr Mahathir said: "They indicated to the two judges that it's good if they were to resign, otherwise the government may have to take action to remove them because we believe that the extension of their office as senior judges was not right.

"The Bar Council and other leading lawyers feel that such an extension is not justified, it has never been done before. We have given judges up to the age of 65 to serve as judge, but extending them means denying other judges the chances of a promotion."

He was also queried on the move by Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), Parti Rakyat

Sarawak (PRS), Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) and Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) to leave the Sarawak Barisan Nasional (BN) and group themselves in a new Sarawak-based Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS) coalition.

Dr Mahathir noted that they were not members of Pakatan Harapan (PH), of which he is chairman, but they had pledged their support to the PH government

"So now we have a very strong support in parliament, not only from PH members of parliament," he said.

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