

Malaysia's system of governance abused by Najib, says Dr Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 2 (Bernama) – Malaysia’s system of governance was abused by his predecessor Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who used his authority to rob the country, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

“The system may be the same but the man is different, that system has had five prime ministers before him and there is no accusation of corruption of that scale against all those four.

“But the system can be abused. What he did was to use his authority to steal money,” Dr Mahathir told BBC’s Hardtalk programme during an interview in London. The 20-minute programme was aired today.

Speaking to the programme’s anchor, Zeinab Badawi, the prime minister said it was up to the court to decide on the charges against Najib.

Najib is currently facing 21 charges over alleged money-laundering activities involving more than RM4.3 billion and four corruption charges with the sum totalling RM2.3 billion related to funds from 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), which was credited into his personal account.

Earlier, in August, Najib faced four charges over alleged abuse of power and money laundering.

Najib pleaded not guilty to all the charges.

“It is enough for us to charge him and its up for the court to decide whether our evidence is

correct or his denial is correct,” Dr Mahathir told BBC’s Hardtalk.

During the interview, Zeinab posed some tough questions about his decision to return to office and work with the then opposition parties in the 14th General Election (GE14) and his relations with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, affirmative actions, his fight against corruption and on the new government, Pakatan Harapan.

Dr Mahathir was on his second-leg visit to United Kingdom from Sept 29 to Oct 1 after attending the United Nations General Assembly in New York. His first-leg visit was from Sept 21 to 25.

To a question, Dr Mahathir said the losses of billions of ringgit during his first premiership was due to foreign currency trading then.

“Well at that time, they didn’t prove that I took any money but we did lose money because some of our people got involved in trading currencies and they lost money,” he said.

To a question that he had brought ‘old guards’ into his administration, the 93-year old prime minister said he needed experienced people to help him administer the country.

“...so if I cannot bring back people who had served me, than I think I have to rely on people with no experience. The people who joined me, they had the same opinion about Najib’s government.

“So, they wanted to join together, form a coalition and beat Najib,” Dr Mahathir said.

Answering a question on his relations with Anwar, the prime minister said they have put their past behind.

“... It was necessary for me to work with him to oust Najib as the PM, so both of us decided to forget about the past because this was far more important to focus on and nothing else,”

he said.

Dr Mahathir reiterated that Anwar will be his successor.

On the affirmative actions, Dr Mahathir said the new government would continue with the affirmative actions to correct the disparity in wealth between the Malays and the other races.

He said he foresaw tension in Malaysia if the disparity became bigger and bigger.

On claims of discrimination of other ethnic groups due to the policy, Dr Mahathir said: “No, there has been no discrimination because if you go to Malaysia, you will find the so called victims of this policy are now the richest people in Malaysia,” he said.

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