Corruption curbed after change in gov't - Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 21 (Bernama) – Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad says the corruption scourge prior to the change in government has been curbed, to an extent that the people are no longer discussing about the topic.

The prime minister said this was because the public, as well as companies and traders, could now deal with the government without any elements of corruption involved.

"We find that talks and complaints from companies and traders that the government (is involved) in corruption is no longer heard. And if we go abroad, no one asks us what's going on in our country anymore.

"This is because when we replaced the (previous) government we also curbed corruption," he said, adding that corruption was almost weeded out because people were afraid of the laws that were being enforced, said the prime minister.

Dr Mahathir said this in a special interview broadcast by television station Astro Awani.

Dr Mahathir said the government's efforts to combat corruption had been successful.

He pointed out that the government's administrative machinery was now free from officials who were found to have failed to perform the tasks entrusted upon them, and instead, reaped profits for themselves.

"We've got rid of these people and if we find that there are criminal elements then action will be taken against them," he said.

He noted that the government needed to ensure that strong evidence was obtained before

bringing any corruption case involving politicians or non-politicians to court.

"If we want to prosecute everybody all at once, it won't be possible, because each case must be investigated so that we have clear evidence that the court can accept. That's why we focus on the (important) cases first and the rest will follow when we get enough information and evidence," Dr Mahathir explained.

Responding to another question, Dr Mahathir said the government was currently considering proposals from the private sector on the provision of infrastructure, such as affordable housing.

"The private sector has a way to make homes that can be sold at low prices, but they can still benefit from the projects, so now we have to focus on the role of the private sector to help carry out most of our promises," said the prime minister.

On the role of young people in the country's development, Dr Mahathir stressed that they should be prepared to work hard without expecting government incentives to pull them ahead.

He also said that the country should reduce dependency on foreign workers, as the outflow of funds would be detrimental to the country.

"To the contrary, if our people are willing to work and the money is not going out of the country, it means that the economic growth will benefit us more," he said.

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