

## **Anwar's Cabinet has good politicians but lacks administrators, says Dr M**

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PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's Cabinet consists of good politicians but lacks administrative competence, with many of its members lacking experience in government, says Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The former prime minister says members of Anwar's government have not been able to translate their popularity into forming a cohesive and effective administration.

"The Cabinet is not made up of good administrators. They are good politicians, but not good administrators. So, they are not leading the country (well)," he said in an exclusive interview with FMT.

He said Anwar himself is too focused on political survival.

"Anwar is not giving the kind of leadership that he should because he is concerned with dealing with people who are opposed to him," he said, citing Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) probes into his sons, Mokhzani and Mirzan, as well as former finance minister Daim Zainuddin.

Earlier this year, Daim and wife Naimah Khalid were charged under the MACC Act 2009 for failing to declare their assets, while Mokhzani and Mirzan were issued notices under Section 36 of the Act requiring them to do so.

Mahathir also expressed concern over the government not being business-friendly enough, saying it has had a detrimental impact on its ability to attract foreign direct investment and foster economic growth.

“The government is not functioning well, and because of that, the economy cannot grow.”

Mahathir said that the Malaysia Inc policy which he introduced in 1981 was aimed at encouraging cooperation between the public and private sectors.

“That (policy) has been shunted aside. People are finding it difficult to do business because of corruption, inefficiency, delays in approvals, and all,” he said.

Mahathir also criticised the government’s approach in handling the rising cost of living, saying hastily implemented tax hikes and subsidy rationalisations have burdened the rakyat.

He said tax increases and policy changes should have been implemented gradually to minimise disruptions to supply chains and consumers.

“(If) you want to raise taxes and all that, you do so gradually, not (all at) one big go.

“(The price of diesel) is going up by RM1.20 (per litre), a very big increase, and that makes people suffer,” he said.

The rationalisation, which took effect on June 10, has seen the price of diesel rise to RM3.35 per litre, but will save the government RM4 billion annually.

On March 1, the government increased service tax from 6% to 8% and expanded its coverage across several sectors. The hike, which excludes essential items such as food and beverage and telecommunication services, is expected to generate an additional RM3 billion in revenue.

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