

Dr M started 'climate of fear' says panel

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PETALING JAYA: The "police state" and "climate of fear" that Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad says now exist under the current administration are actually his own creations from 22 years of power, the Civil Rights Committee of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (CRC-KLSCAH) said.

However, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi must begin democratising reforms if he is sincere in breaking away from Mahathir's authoritarianism, CRC-KLSCAH chairman Ser Choon Ing said in a statement.

Ser challenged both Abdullah and Mahathir to support seven measures to dismantle the "police state" and "climate of fear", including

- » repealing the Internal Security Act (ISA);
- » establishing the Independent Police Complaint and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC);
- » reforming media-related laws through a parliamentary select committee;
- » liberalising the universities by replacing the Universities and University Colleges Act (UCA) with legislation produced through wide consultation;
- » combating corruption through institutionalised means, for example, by making the ACA a statutory body
- » accountable to Parliament;
- » amending relevant laws to uphold the constitutional freedoms of expression, assembly and association; and
- » establishing truth commissions to hold accountable those who abused power, and to correct the wrong and compensate the victims of the 1987 *Operasi Lalang* and 1988 judicial crisis.

"So far, Abdullah has failed to keep his promises of combating corruption, reforming bureaucracy and listening to the truth.

Instead, disappointingly, he has frequently suppressed the freedom of expression and information," Ser said.

"If the PM wants to bury Mahathir's criticisms, he must show his political determination to initiate democratising reforms and to break away from the authoritarianism inherited from Mahathir. Malaysians will then surely rally behind him."

He noted that Mahathir's complaints of having his political freedom curbed were the "standard treatment for political dissent" during his premiership.

"Many Malaysians, from his former deputy Anwar Ibrahim to opposition and community leaders, have suffered worse persecutions," he said, adding that if Mahathir's criticism are to have credibility, he must support the seven measures.

On Friday, Mahathir said in a statement a "climate of fear has enveloped" the country, and he had to criticise Abdullah because no one else was able to.

He also said any person who tried to hold a function that may criticise Abdullah would be "harassed

Mubarak explains Dr M's actions

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PUTRAJAYA: The group of Umno veterans who brokered the four-eyed meeting between the prime minister and his combative predecessor has written to several cabinet members to explain why Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad called two press conferences after that.

The association of former members of Parliament and state assemblymen (Mubarak) had sent letters to Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and several Umno cabinet ministers and mentris besar.

This followed Mubarak's meet-

ing with Mahathir at the Perdana Leadership Foundation on Monday, their second such meeting this month. It is believed Mahathir handed over a transcript of the two-hour dialogue on Oct 22 to four Mubarak members led by Tan Sri Khalid Abdullah.

Without going into details, Najib said the letter explained why Mahathir called for the press conferences (Oct 22 and 23) in which he revealed what happened at the meeting, and in the process made further comments. It also explained why Mahathir continued to criticise the government and the leadership.

Najib said: "We had encouraged

the meeting between Tun and Prime Minister Abdullah. It was Mubarak's initiative and they had played a role for the prime minister and Tun to meet. The meeting did not end the way we had hoped."

On the government and Umno's next move, Najib said: "I think we all want to see the government concentrate on fulfilling our promises to the people and to implement projects, programmes under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

"At the end of the day, the government needs the support of the people. The best way for the government to secure support is to deliver our promises."

On Mahathir's continued criticisms, he said the government and Umno will have to manage it. "We will ensure that the government, especially the prime minister, has the full support of cabinet members, the administration as well as party members."

Asked to comment on Mahathir's various positions as adviser in government-linked companies and also whether the Umno Supreme Council would discuss it tomorrow, Najib said: "I don't know and don't wish to comment on that."