

Dr M: High-cost economy can benefit Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has proposed that Malaysia adopt a high-cost economy similar to developed countries to elevate the wages of its people.

The former prime minister, in explaining the concept, rationalised that given an increase in the prices of goods, invariably the wages of the rakyat would be forced to spiral upwards.

"It is very strange to put such a notion into context, but think of it from a broader perspective.

"For example, generally developed countries are high-cost countries, and yet they are competitive and their standards of living are without exception higher than in low-cost countries," he surmised.

Dr Mahathir said that given a rapid and constant exchange of money, via spending, the economy would definitely improve.

Given this reason, he said that adjusting and managing a high-cost economy should be taken into consideration by the present government.

Other possible benefits included a narrowing of the poverty line and attraction of investments domestically and from foreign markets, he added.

Dr Mahathir was speaking during a lecture series titled "Approaching 2020 - Major Trends that will Impact Malaysian Business" here yesterday, organised by the Perdana Leadership Foundation.

He later also accommodated a question-and-answer session with participants.

The former premier's wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, earlier also launched a book titled *Mahathir Mohamad - An Illustrated Biography*, which candidly records Dr Mahathir's life events in comic strips.

Date for Lim-Koh live debate to be fixed

Current and former CMs to discuss land scam issues

GEORGE TOWN: The current and former Penang Chief Ministers are prepared to face off in a live television debate on the land scam issue. But to date, they have yet to fix a date for the meet.

Dr Koh Tsu Koon said he is prepared to accept the challenge although his successor "dared not" accept his two conditions.

He said Lim refused to consider his request.

Dr Koh had asked that the debate be conducted fairly and only after the conclusion of a court hearing on a land scam case involving a RM40mil suit.

He said since Lim was "unwilling and even afraid" to allow him access to basic information, he just had to rely on his own memory in his replies in the upcoming debate.

"Therefore, if the information I can recall is not as accurate and exact, it can't be twisted as evidence that I am trying to mislead the public," he said.

Lim said, with his five-month experience as a chief minister, he was willing to take on Dr Koh who had an 18-year experience.

However, he said he was puzzled about

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LIM GUAN ENG

representing Gerakan," he told a press conference in his Komtar office.

On Thursday, the portal stated that it would organise the debate to be aired live by a television station belonging to the Media Prima Group.

The debate would touch on various current issues with specific focus on matters related to Penang, except for the so-called "land scam controversy," which was being heard in court.

Lim said he had planned to debate on land scams before moving to other issues later.

"One of the land scams is not a court matter. The one which is only involves a court appeal on its quantum as the matter of its liability has been settled," he said.

Lim said he was not accusing Dr Koh of benefiting from the scams but since they happened under his administration, he should be accountable for them.

"I need to know from him how many more are there and how the mistakes were made. Each time I touch a file, I'm scared to find another land scam. It's like a minefield!" he said.

an announcement by news portal *Agenda Daily* that the open debate had been set on Aug 20 in Shah Alam.

He said his press secretary Cheong Yin Fan received a letter on Thursday from the portal to inform him of the debate's venue and date.

"However, it did not state if it was acting on behalf of Dr Koh. If it is, I welcome the invitation to debate without conditions on the RM124mil land scam issue.

"My impression is that it (the portal) is

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