

# Elyas rubbishes KL Datuk Bandar proposal

By RAHMAN DAROS

**KUALA Lumpur always had a senior civil servant at its helm, said former mayor Tan Sri Elyas Omar, who questioned the opposition's motives in politicising the post by seeking to have an elected mayor.**

"The present system ensures that Datuk Bandar (mayor) is a professional civil servant. All those appointed have come from the PTD (Administrative and Diplomatic Officer service), except for two."

The second mayor, Tan Sri Yaakob Latiff, came from the Information Ministry while the seventh, Datuk Ruslin Hasan, was previously a senior civil servant within the City Hall.

"They were senior officers from the civil service with wide-ranging experience and knowledge," he told *The Malay Mail* yesterday.

Given the importance of ensuring the nation's capital is run well, he said the public should ask themselves if they would prefer to have the mayor's appointment process turned into a political circus which could see the possibility of someone without any civil service background taking charge.

The 72-year-old Elyas, who served as the third mayor between 1981 and 1992, said there will be some serious implications to con-

sider if the mayor is elected.

"Since the Datuk Bandar is elected by the entire people in Kuala Lumpur, he will be more powerful than any of the MPs as they are elected only for their constituencies.

"These MPs cannot then overrule the mayor but the reverse is true. The elected mayor could simply ignore them and they (MPs) would have no role in the City Hall because they are not advisory board members."

"If the whole city area is to be politicised, it could create an unruly mess.

"Therefore, if you want to have the mayor position to be an elected one, then you must also consider the need to elect all the board members," he said.

Elyas further noted that the mayor's responsibility extends far beyond the Kuala Lumpur people as the city also belongs to the whole nation.

"If they think that the mayor should be elected in order to be responsible to the people, then they must remember that Kuala Lumpur is a Federal capital ... a Federal Territory. It belongs to the entire nation, not just the Kuala Lumpur people alone.

"This means that people in all States like Sabah, Selangor and others also have some say in the running of the city.

"So, why give the privilege only

## Kuala Lumpur mayors

| Name   | Tenure       |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Tan Sri Lokman Yusof<br>(then known as Commissioner of Federal Capital) | 1961-1972    |
| 2. Tan Sri Yaakob Latiff   | 1973-1983    |
| 3. Tan Sri Elyas Omar  | 1983-1992    |
| 4. Datuk Dr. Mazlan Ahmad  | 1992-1995    |
| 5. Tan Sri Kamaruzzaman Shariff  | 1995-2001    |
| 6. (R) Col. Datuk Mohamad Shaid Mohd Taufek                                | 2001-2004    |
| 7. Datuk Ruslin Hasan  | 2004-2006    |
| 8. Datuk Ab Hakim Borhan   | 2006-present |

to the Kuala Lumpur people when the Federal capital belongs to the Parliament and nation?" he asked.

When it comes to accountability, Elyas said the mayor reports to the Parliament.

"I remember that I had to submit the annual report to the Parliament and had to appear before the Public Accounts Committee.

"I was queried why I developed Wangsa Maju area through the privatisation method as at time, there was no privatisation policy yet. Now, isn't that being accountable enough?"

Elyas also said the mayor was already "indirectly elected" even though he is currently appointed by the Federal Territory Minister. This is because "the Minister appoints the mayor after he has consulted with the Prime Minister.



ELYAS: Don't politicise mayor appointment

And the Prime Minister himself is elected by the people."

"In my case, I was appointed by the Prime Minister but my appointment was brought up and debated in the cabinet. We must remember that a mayor is not appointed by PSD (public service department) or the civil service."