

GLCs and GLICs must be run professionally, says PM

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which is the pension fund for the civil service.

"These companies have well-established and clear mandates.

"Unfortunately, despite this, they were previously made to serve the interest of self-serving and greedy leaders," he said, adding that the government had "no business to be in business".

GLCs and GLICs, he said, must be professionally-run and should not stifle private-sector competition.

A competitive landscape, he added, would ensure healthy competition and efficient outcomes.

Dr Mahathir said the imbalance between public and private sector participation in corporate Malaysia, if left unchecked, could prove detrimental to the country's future.

"GLICs and GLCs must focus on creating strong institutions and establishing the necessary infrastructure and supporting policies to fuel the growth, and by doing so, become a catalyst that will spur the private sector," he said.

The PNB Corporate Summit was organised by PNB Research Institute Sdn Bhd, the research unit of PNB.

PNB group chairman Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz, in her welcoming speech, said the summit aimed to surface the important issues relevant to the corporate sector.

The private sector, she said, had a key role in driving and achieving the country's sustainable growth agenda.

"Towards this end, and echoing the government's call for transformation, GLICs and GLCs must be conscious of their role in the economy and for the need to re-evaluate their priorities," she said.

She added that these companies must take on an important role in propelling greater private-sector participation to contribute to Malaysia's long-term sustainable growth.

Later, during a panel session, Khazanah Nasional Bhd managing director Datuk Shahril Ridza Ridzuan said corporates should not be deemed as "GLCs" just because they had GLCs or GLICs as investors.

"Just because Khazanah happens to own shares in CIMB (Bank), it doesn't mean CIMB should be considered a GLC.

"It has to compete head on with all the other commercial banks – as well as with the fintech companies and other disruptors," he said, citing the bank as an example.

The best thing that the government could do, he said, was to "unshackle" these companies from having to act like GLCs or government entities, and to enable them to focus on improving their business and competing on a level playing field.

"And if this means being disruptive to your own workforce, or shedding jobs, then you should just do it," he said.

He noted, however, that there were some national monopolies, such as Tenaga Nasional Bhd, for which a slightly different approach was needed.