

Our democratic system is for real, says Dr M

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KUALA KANGSAR, Sun. — The Government believes in true democracy — a system which may not continue to exist if the rakyat makes a wrong decision when choosing their leaders, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The people, he said, should not believe they will be able to enjoy the benefits they have now if there was a change of Government.

"The democratic system practiced here is for real and is definitely not for show only, as in some other countries.

"Here, anybody eligible can stand for election and the people

'It will cease to exist with the wrong leaders'

have a hand in deciding whom they want as leaders," he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was speaking at the opening of a one-day community leaders' course for about 500 people from four parliamentary constituencies — Kuala Kangsar, Padang Rengas, Sungai Siput and Grik — at the Dewan Merdeka here.

The Deputy Prime Minister said such a system ensures that only re-

sponsible leaders were elected to power.

If these leaders have proved themselves to be self-centred and unresponsive to the needs of the people, they should be voted out, he said.

Need for ISA

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, however, reminded the rakyat to be cautious and careful when voting.

A wrong move, he said,

could result in hardship for them, as was the case in Kelantan where the people suffered for 18 years.

Referring to the Batu Pahat incident, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir urged Muslims to be cautious of non-genuine dakwah groups who use religion as a tool for their insincere objectives.

Such groups, he said, might initially start off with genuine dakwah teachings to lure followers but subsequently "hypnotise" and use them for their own purpose.

Genuine dakwah teachers, the Deputy Prime Minister said, had nothing to hide and did not need to conduct teachings in isolated places.

He said the fanatics in the Batu Pahat incident were all normal Muslims until they were adversely influenced, and in this respect, every Muslim should be cautious lest there will be a repetition of the incident.

The Government, he said, could not guarantee that the incident will not occur again, and he called on the people to give their full co-operation to ensure peace and harmony in the country.

The Deputy Prime Minister also touched on the necessity of laws to protect the peace and prosperity of the people and the country as a whole.

He said he had been asked by a foreign journalist as to why the Internal Security Act was not abolished as the situation in the country was peaceful.

"Laws are made to prevent the possible occurrence of crimes, to benefit the people and ensure it is safe for us to walk on the streets," said the Deputy Prime Minister.