

Strong—for the good of all

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia must have a strong Government to ensure the potential of the country is fully harnessed for the good of everyone.

He said a strong Government needed power as it was a necessity if society was to remain orderly.

Speaking at the Annual Bar

Council Dinner, the Prime Minister said that "there should not be absolute power but power, effective power, there must be if society is to thrive and progress."

He said the majority that the Barisan Nasional commanded in Parliament was absolutely necessary in order to maintain an orderly society.

He agreed that powerful Governments posed a certain danger even though its power may not be absolute.

He also said there was a fear in this country that the Government will exploit its two-thirds majority.

"I am not saying that this is not possible but in a developing country the need for a strong Government is so great that the danger of vesting too much power in a Government must be accepted," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia has been able to make tremendous progress due to the continuance of strong Governments — Governments with large majorities in Parliament.

He hoped, "for my part and for obvious reasons" that Malaysians will vote into power strong Governments.

On the recent move of the Government to free ISA detainees on condition that they leave Malaysia, the Prime Minister said the Government has every right to deprive a person, who did not care for the interests of society, of his rights in this country.

He said in this country, society's rights overrode those of the individuals.

"If the individuals do not care for the interests of society, then society has a right to deprive them of their lives under certain circumstances," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said those who are so moved by the sufferings of the detainees, can now alleviate them by accepting these people as citizens.

"It is our experience that people who condemn racialism or whatever else, soon change their minds when they have the spectre of racial problems or whatever, at their doorsteps.

Citizenship

"It is also our feeling that those who talk of human rights from a distance are less concerned when such rights are ignored in front of their noses," he added.

He also took to task Malaysians who continue to criticise the nation despite the country's success.

He called on all Malaysians to stand back and look again at this country as it would help improve their perspective and make them better citizens.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said legally, there were quite a lot of things which Malaysians can be proud of.

The country still retained its Constitution and democracy although it "is not one hundred per cent Westminster."

Free elections were being held regularly and people who were opposed to the Government still got elected.

He also said Malaysia did not have two classes of citizens as "some people in this country and outside are fond of tal-

king about how some Malaysians are second class citizens."

On the other hand, he said, a country very close "to our hearts" has recently legislated into being not two classes, but three classes of citizens.

He said this country also has refused to recognize passports issued by them to coloured colonials.

"Perhaps, not many of us noticed this," he said.

On the role of the Bar Council, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the Government was studying this role with regard to law-making.

He said the Government will study the council's advice but it reserved the right to accept or reject it.

However, when a proposal became law, he said the legal community's role would be limited to its application, as "law makers should make the law and the practitioners should practice it."

"However, without campaigning for the next election, I would like to point out that change is not always for the better."

"We see in many countries agitations for change — and when there was change the people and the nation were worse off."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also said the Government was looking into the various grouses of the council.