

DAYS OF FEUDALISM ARE OVER

By ROBERT HO

MALACCA, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir-Mohamad said today that the days of feudalism are over and it is now the rakyat who choose their own leaders.

The Prime Minister also criticised certain groups of people who "tried to instigate the Rulers against the people" by alleging that the Government had compromised so much in resolving the Constitution amendments issue that the interests of the people had been neglected.

He also hit out at a local newspaper for "trying to use the Constitution amendments issue to boost its circulation."

Addressing about 80,000 people at the Padang Pahlawan here, the Prime Minister said of feudalism: "We can no longer have such a system."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman, said that in the days of Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat, the rakyat did not have any rights.

"But now the situation has changed. We cannot have such a system again. The days of the feudal system are over," he said.

He explained that the "rakyat system is simple and it is the rakyat who choose their own leaders."

He said if the rakyat made the wrong choice,

they could always choose again.

He stressed that it was because of this that he emphasised several times that the "rakyat system can guarantee justice in our country."

"There are no other way," he said.

To this, the crowd shouted *Hidup Mahathir* but the Prime Minister replied that this was not important.

"What is important is *Hidup Rakyat* because it is not me who makes the rakyat but the rakyat who makes Mahathir," he added.

The Prime Minister then led the crowd in three shouts of *Hidup Rakyat*.

On the many similar rallies held recently, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said there were certain people who claimed that the rakyat were forced to attend the rallies.

He said that if these people wanted to know whether the rakyat came voluntarily or were forced, they should come and see for themselves.

"They claimed that the rallies were only showpieces. I only wish I can bring these people here ...," he said.

On the Constitution amendments, he thanked God that the Bill had been signed.

Pointing out that the issue had been solved through compromise, he stressed that the principle of parliamentary democracy and the voice of the people's struggle could not "be sold so cheaply."

"We do not want to take everything but we hold firm to the principle that it is ultimately the people who determine the country's administration," he said.

Criticising a local newspaper, the Prime Minister reminded the newspaper not to mistake the Government's liberal attitude for weakness.

"We can revoke whatever permits we have given and they should be a bit polite in this matter," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir stressed that he did not want the Constitution amendments issue to be used to undermine the good relations between the Rulers and the people and that between Umno leaders and their members.

He warned that the Government would act against anyone, within or abroad, who caused such a split. He believed that such action would have the support of the people like that which the Constitution amendments issue received.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said that the issue could have been resolved earlier when Umno vice-president Encik Ghafar Baba and the Umno delegation had an audience with the Rulers at Istana Bukit Kayangan, Shah Alam, on Nov. 20 if not for those who had said that the issue did not have the unanimous support of the people.

"They had stated that

Umno itself was divided, that other parties in the Barisan, including the MIC and the MCA, did not agree with the amendments and that the Chinese and Indians did not agree," he said.

The Malacca Umno Youth later presented Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir with a Taming *Seri* keris on occasion of his 58th birthday tomorrow.

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