

# FREEDOM'S LIMITS

By I. RAJESWARY

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The Prime Minister heralded Parliament's silver jubilee celebrations today by saying that the May 13, 1969, racial riots had made the Government realise that unlimited freedom could not possibly be practised in a country with a plural society.

And there was no need for Malaysians to feel ashamed or apologetic about a system of democracy which has been modified to suit the wishes and needs of the people, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told guests to the celebration, among whom were the third Prime Minister, Tun Hussein Onn, and the first Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat, Tan Sri Haji Mohamed Noah bin Omar.

"What is important is that this system provided the rakyat the right to choose the Go-

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vernment and the Government had no right to rule like a dictator," Dr Mahathir said.

"We found that unlimited discussions, allegations and provocation by irresponsible

THE general election will not be held as early as speculated, Dr Mahathir said after the Umno Supreme Council meeting yesterday. He said the council had discussed the election but no date had been decided. "I have never told you all lies... in fact, I am always telling you the truth," he chuckled to reporters. — Bernama.

quarters would inflame racial sentiments and cause tension within society. We, therefore, disallowed several sensitive issues from being discussed.

"Everyone, especially the younger generation, must be aware of these restrictions, and why they are there so that they will not be easily tricked by certain groups which measure the kind of freedom we practise with that practised in other countries.

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"These restrictions were not imposed arbitrarily but were made based on the wishes of the people via Parliament."

Dr Mahathir said the meaning of democracy differed from country to country. In truth, however, there was no such thing as an "ideal democracy."

Some countries considered themselves democratic when in fact they were autocratic while others

were so democratic in acceding to the interests of the minorities that the rights of the majority were ignored, he said.

"No one in the world can say that elections in Malaysia are not free," he said. "It is free and there has never been an occasion where the Government has won all the seats it contested."

"The Opposition has also won some seats but if they are few in number, then it is also the rakyat's decision."

The Prime Minister said that democracy was created for the interests of the people and if the people abused it to the detriment of society, then the concept of "democracy for democracy's sake" had to be rethought.

"Democracy gives us freedom but not to the extent that that freedom destroys democracy. That is why the Communist Party is banned," he said.

"They wish to use democracy to usurp power to des-

troy democracy. Although on the surface, the action of outlawing the Communist Party is undemocratic, the objective is to safeguard democracy.

"It is the same with other actions. In the long run, it is aimed at safeguarding democracy."

Dr Mahathir reminded students that it was due to the existence of such a democracy that they were given the freedom and support to pursue knowledge in the form of higher education.

He urged them to beware of certain people who were bent on running down the country's system of government. He also reminded MPs to be "sensitive" to the aspirations of the people and place the rakyat's interests above their own.

Dr Mahathir and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam and Datin Maria and other guests then viewed an exhibition of Parliament's 25 years.