

# Our system — alive and well

HST 31 MAR 1985

**KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. —**  
**Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mo-**  
**hamad has hailed the Malay-**  
**sian system of parliamen-**  
**tary democracy and**  
**declared that it is important**  
**to both the people and the**  
**Government.**

Launching the celebrations to mark 25 years of Malaysian Parliament at Parliament House, the Prime Minister said the system had greatly helped to develop the country and protect the rights of everyone, including the minority.

He was proud of the system and wanted everyone to recognise and ap-

**By FARUSH KHAN**

preciate it, adding that it had been nurtured and preserved to become a linchpin of stability.

He gave the assurance that the Government would hold firm to fair princi-

- Editorial comment: P16
- Last week at the Dewan: P7

ples, particularly in the case of minorities, as enumerated in the Constitution.

"Democracy gives freedom, but not to the point that it ruins us. That is why the communist party is not allowed in this country.

"They planned to use democracy to wrest power so that they could use the power to eliminate democracy.

"The act of banning the communist party is undemocratic on the surface, but the aim is to preserve democracy."

He did not deny that there were limitations in the country's democratic system, but reminded the people that they were unavoidable in a plural society like Malaysia's.

"The people, especially the younger generation, must realise these limitations so that they will not be easily misled by certain groups who always take the opportunity to gauge the freedom we practise according to the freedom practised in other countries."

He said Malaysians need not feel insulted nor apologetic just because their democratic system differed from those practised in other countries.

"What is important is that this system gives the choice to the people to elect the Government and the Government is not given the right to rule dictatorially."

The interpretation of democracy varied from one country to another, he said, adding that there were countries which claimed to be democratic, but instead practised autocracy.

There are others which are too democratic in terms of freedom, to the extent that the rights of minorities are threatened.

## Appreciation

"There is no ideal democracy which is completely flawless in this world. All democracies, whether in the West or in the East, in developed countries or in developing countries, have flaws. Our system is to suit the situation in our country."

The Prime Minister said no one in the world could say that Malaysian elections did not give the freedom of choice.

"There has never been a time when the ruling party won 100 per cent of the seats contested. The Opposition also gets its places. If its numbers

is the choice of the people."

Parliamentary democracy, said the Prime Minister, had enabled the country to have strong foundations in social and security development.

"We have managed to enact the National Education Policy, implement projects, particularly in rural areas, and overcome threats to national security from within and without."

However, based on the experience of the May 13 incident, he said the Government realised that unlimited freedom could not be practised in a plural society like Malaysia's.

Therefore, the democratic system had been readjusted to suit the requirements and needs of the community.

"We found that unlimited

discussion, accusation and provocation by irresponsible people could fan racial feelings and cause tension among the people.

"With this awareness, we have disallowed sensitive issues to be debated."

He reminded Malaysians that the democratic system was introduced for their benefit and that they should strive for its preservation.

"No system is good only because of itself. The system and those practising it must act rationally ... before something good can emerge from that particular system."

Dr Mahathir expressed his appreciation to past leaders who had fought for independence as well as former MPs and State Assemblymen, including those from the Opposition, who had played vital roles in ensuring the continuation of parliamentary democracy.