

PM: Constructive criticism welcome

NST 16 MAR 1985

PENANG, Fri. — Constructive criticism still has a place in Malaysia, says Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Launching a student leadership awareness camp at Universiti Sains Malaysia today, he said the people should speak out against any deviation.

"Do we want a Malaysia with no voice of dissent at all, or to quote an English saying, with the silence of the grave?"

"If there is any deviation, we must speak out even if it is against Government action or leadership if we feel that such deviation is harmful to the country," he added.

However, the Prime Minister warned that the people must think rationally and not act hastily as there would be repercussions if they are governed by emotions.

Issues and problems, he said, must be thoroughly discussed and scrutinised in order to seek a proper and effective solution.

"Although we desire peace and stability, this should not stop us from criticising anything which we think can harm the

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country."

Dr Mahathir said there are certain safeguards to ensure that criticism is made constructively but those who are not in power will always say that such limitations are unfair.

However, these people when they come to power will readily agree that these limitations and restrictions are most necessary, he said.

"Leaders will have to go one day and they will be replaced by younger people but we certainly want to see peace and stability maintained even when we go."

The Prime Minister said there were some imperfections and weaknesses in the democratic system as practised here since the system was made by man.

"But we must not be so enraptured in wanting to change our system each time we perceive a possible weakness. We do not

change the system or organisation when the weakness lies within ourselves."

Every five years, he said, unsuitable leaders can be replaced through democratic means. He urged the people not to abuse the opportunity to change the system without a good reason and advised them to be sincere in this respect.

"Malaysia is still a developing country and we need peace and stability to ensure that development can go off smoothly and without any hindrance."

Dr Mahathir said certain solutions may work in developed countries but may not be practical for Malaysia and the fact that the country is multi-racial should be taken into consideration.

"Any form of extremism is not suitable for our society. That which is required by our society is moderation. What we want to see are students who concentrate on their studies but at the same time are aware of problems confronting the people and willing to help find solutions," he said.