

# PM on those who abuse freedom to criticise

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SHAH ALAM, Fri. — **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad criticised certain groups for attempting to condemn the Government as undemocratic by abusing the very freedom they enjoy in the nation's system of democracy.**

The Prime Minister, who spoke at length on democracy in Malaysia, said these groups would not waste any opportunity to speak ill of the nation to foreigners.

He added that they challenged the Gov-

ernment to take action against them by increasingly abusing their democratic rights.

"This sort of strategy has destroyed democracy in several countries. If democracy still exists in Malaysia, it is

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because the majority of the *rakyat* understand how to use it and know its limit and therefore reject the instigations made by these groups," he said when opening the MIC's

34th general assembly at the Sultan Salahuddin Aziz Shah Building.

Dr Mahathir, who is the Barisan Nasional and Umno president, said in a democratic system there often existed groups which regarded themselves more qualified to run the nation than the leaders who were elected by the people.

He said they did not, however, directly participate in political activities because they were not confident of influencing the majority of the people to support them.

He added that these

groups exploited the racial sentiments that prevailed in a multiracial country like Malaysia in the hope that the Government would take stern action against them.

"When the Government acts to curb their dangerous activities, they take the opportunity to condemn the Government as undemocratic."

Dr Mahathir said it was not democracy as a political system that ensured the nation's stability but the practitioner of democracy.

He said in Malaysia it was the Barisan Nasional

that truly understood and practised well the democratic system.

"If Malaysia did not have the Alliance and then the Barisan Nasional, there would have been dozens of parties challenging one another and not one would obtain enough representation to form a Government."

## **Democracy**

Dr Mahathir said even if the Barisan Nasional could be regarded as "a marriage of convenience", it was one that remained stable unlike those in several other

countries.

He urged the component parties in the Barisan Nasional to realise their responsibilities and to protect and practise well the system of democracy that they had helped to bring about.

"Let us not exceed the limits of democracy and cause its destruction in this country. If we believe in the voice of the majority, we must abide by the majority."

"The interest of the majority is protected in a democracy but it does not

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# People urged to know Govt policies

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mean that the minority can use illegal or ugly tactics against the majority."

Dr Mahathir said it was vital that the Barisan Nasional component parties acted responsibly and did not accommodate the chauvinism of opposition parties.

"Remember, if the Barisan Nasional is split, then democracy in this country will be destroyed."

He also spoke of the need for Barisan Nasional MPs and State Assemblymen to read and understand the standing orders of the Dewan Rakyat and the respective State Assemblies.

They should also understand well the issues and implications of a particular Bill that is being tabled in either the Dewan Rakyat or State Assembly.

Dr Mahathir said a lack of understanding of these matters often gave rise to a conflict of opinion between component parties and caused "hurtful words to be uttered between friends".

"So let us all make sure that we understand the Government policies, the background, the rationale, objectives and the programmes drawn to ensure the success of a particular policy."

On the MIC, the Prime Minister said party members should be proud of the party's achievements to date.

He added that the MIC was increasingly getting stronger because its members were united and gave their full support to the leadership.

He also thanked the MIC, especially its Youth and Wanita leaders, who had realised the wisdom for Barisan Nasional component party leaders to use channels available, such as the Cabinet, to express any dissatisfaction they might have.