

# DON'T PUSH

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# US: Dr M

PETALING JAYA, Sat. — The Prime Minister warned Malaysians today that the Government's liberalism was not a "licence" for anyone to jeopardise the nation's peace.

"Some are of the view that this Government is weak and can be manipulated. But if national peace is affected, priority would be accorded towards bringing back that peace and not towards liberalism," he said at the opening of the MIC's 35th general assembly in Subang Jaya.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government was prepared to continue with its liberal policy but it had to ensure that this liberalism was not misinterpreted or abused.

The allegation that things were better before was baseless, he said. Racism was apparent then, too, which is why the 1969 racial riots happened. "The difference is that now we are more liberal and many people have taken advantage of this freedom to touch on sensitive matters," he added. "Even the Constitution has been attacked several times and yet the Government has not taken any action."

Dr Mahathir said laws were not effective in preserving liberalism. "If people value liberalism, they must be prepared to preserve this given freedom," he said.

He said many people were clever in dodging charges of having abused the Constitution. "What is worse is that they are equally clever in using the law to escape legal action (against them)," he said.

"There are people who demand the rule of law.

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## PM: Discuss within Barisan

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But these same people or this type of people disregard the rule of law by their cunningness in making use of the law — including British common law.

"I am worried that this trend will bring discredit to the profession and to certain institutions. If this happens, the outcome would be very unpleasant for everyone, including those who misuse this liberalism."

The Prime Minister had said recently that there were leaders who acted like heroes merely to garner support from members and groups of people without considering the effects (of their action) towards the Barisan Nasional, and the country as a whole.

"In a multiracial society, we cannot become heroes without jeopardising our image as national leader," he said today. "While we

are out to safeguard the interest of our race, we should not be slighted by petty issues.

"If we intend to articulate these small issues, there is a channel for us within the Barisan Nasional, without having to make a big fuss about it," and he urged leaders to use this channel.

He said even in the past, problems within the Barisan Nasional had been discussed in established channels.

Dr Mahathir said those who did not have to face the ballot box every five years should identify their priorities.

"Just because their positions are not threatened, they should not ignore the problems of those people who have to go to the people once every five years," he said.

He added that one of the problems in maintaining the balance between the races was that people were

obsessed with meaningless symbolism."

As a result, he said, the real struggles were left behind.

Dr Mahathir said the Government's main task was in recovery and economic development, for which political stability was needed.

"But some people, knowing the importance of political stability for economic growth and the Government's desire for economic recovery, are deliberately challenging the Government," he said.

He said the Barisan Nasional could not be defeated by the tactic of belittling the voice of the majority because the people were not prepared for democracy to be replaced by an oligarchy.

"Barisan Nasional component parties, including the MIC, must struggle to preserve this democracy. We must strengthen our re-

spective parties and then strive for co-operation from other component parties.

"This way, all efforts by the destabilisers will be thwarted and political stability and economic development will be continued.

"We should not allow negative views to hinder us from our course which we have agreed to. We must further strengthen unity and understanding in opposing those with narrow political interests."

After his speech, Dr Mahathir was conferred the MIC's gold medal award for his contribution and service to the nation, and the MIC and the Indian community.

MIC president Datuk S. Samy Vellu hailed Dr Mahathir as a sort of "secretary-general of the United Nations" — in this case, a small "united nations."

Also present at the opening were leaders of other component parties of the Barisan Nasional.