

Mahathir: Stability our priority

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PETALING JAYA, Sat. Liberalism has its limits, the Prime Minister said today, and warned that should the country's stability be in danger "we will give priority to restoring that stability and not to our policy of being liberal".

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said several people had taken advantage of the present Government's liberal mood to touch on issues that were sensitive to the different races.

"Even the Constitution has been repeatedly violated without any action by the Government," he said at the opening of the 35th MIC general assembly at a hotel in Subang Jaya here today.

He warned them, however, that liberalism did not mean the licence or permit to do anything that would threaten the stability of the country.

"There are some who are of the view that the present Government is weak, but if the stability of the country is in danger, then we will give priority to restoring that stability and not our policy of being liberal.

"If the people value this liberalism, then they must be clever in looking after the freedom they have."

He said laws were no longer effective in keeping violators in check as many of them had learnt to use their knowledge of the law to evade action by the law.

"There are those who clamour about the 'Rule of Law'. Yet, they are the same people who deny the 'Rule of Law' by using their

Losing sight of the struggle that's at hand

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ingenuity to tool with the law — including what is known as the British Common Law.

"Do not allow these discordant voices in society to obstruct us and change the course we have all agreed upon."

Dr Mahathir said the Barisan Nasional would not be easily defeated by tactics which sought to belittle the voice of the majority as it was its duty to protect democracy.

"The people of this country will not allow democracy to be removed and replaced with oligarchy."

The Prime Minister also touched on the growing trend among leaders to act out "communal heroism" to catch the support of members and personal glory for themselves.

He advised the leaders of Barisan Nasional parties to use the proper channels in resolving their issues.

"They fail to take into account the effect their actions will have on the Barisan coalition and the nation itself."

To act in such a manner would result in jeopardising their image as leaders of all the rakyat — especially in a plural society — and a coalition of varied races and understanding such as embodied in the Barisan.

"This does not mean that we will have to push aside our own interests for that of the other races and parties in the Barisan Nasional.

"Instead, whilst we protect the interests of our own community, we must also ensure that we are not easily aroused by all this drivel.

"If we wish to discuss such matters, then let us do it without fuss by using the channels that exist in the Barisan Nasional."

One of the reasons why we have failed to maintain a balance among the different races is because of our pre-occupation with symbolism "which is devoid of substance", he said.

"Whilst we channel all our energy and time in working towards the symbols that we have created, we tend in the meantime, to lose sight of the true struggle at hand."

The Prime Minister said he was confident that the problems within the Barisan Nasional or those between the different races, could be settled in an amicable and calm manner.

He said this was evidenced in the manner in which problems of conflict between different parties and races had always been settled throughout the history of the Barisan Nasional and its early forerunner, the Alliance.

All that was needed was patience in handling the issues that they were being confronted with so as not to add to their complexity.

"All parties concerned should realise this fact and always work towards ensuring easy solutions to our problems.

"At the same time, we have to bear in mind that the best solution is the solution that does not entirely satisfy the demands the parties involved," he said.

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