

Dr M: Events in Eastern Europe good for democracy

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ALOR STAR, Thurs. — The recent events in Eastern Europe where the people rose against communist dictatorship are a good development for democracy, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said today.

He said it showed that communist rule in countries like Hungary, East Germany and Poland was no longer popular among the people.

"We like them to oppose ... because we do not like communist dictatorship," Bernama quoted him as telling a gathering of about 2,000 civil servants at Dewan Datuk Syed Omar here.

It was the Prime Minister's first public comment on the pro-democracy movement sweeping Eastern Europe.

Dr Mahathir said, however, Malaysia did not wish to see chaos arising from the people's loss of confidence in their governments.

He added: "We hope that order can be restored and that they will finally practise the democratic system."

On the home front, Dr Mahathir said any coal-

tion formed out of desperation by splinter parties after a general election to seize power would fail.

He said the Barisan Nasional, on the other hand, was a coalition which was formulated before elections were held and was based on power-sharing principles.

It was also voted into power by the people, he added.

"Thus any attempt by splinter opposition parties to group together only after an election just to seize power cannot possibly become an alternative coalition to the Barisan," he added.

He said the Barisan was able to maintain a two-thirds majority in Parliament, making it a strong and stable coalition government.

He added that even if a party in the coalition were to pull out, the Barisan's status would not be threatened.

As an example, he said the Barisan remained intact with more than a two-thirds majority when 16 MPs crossed over to the Semangat 46.

"The situation will be

different if the coalition was formed by splinter parties, each without a convincing number of seats in Parliament.

"When one pulls out the whole ruling party will collapse because it will no longer enjoy majority support.

"As such the Barisan must be given full support with a convincing majority in Parliament at all times in order to maintain national stability.

"If the Barisan only enjoys a 51 per cent stake in Parliament, its position will be threatened by pull-outs," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the people should thus be wary and not fall into the trap of opposition parties and, instead, reject any suggestion of "an alternative coalition government after a general election."

He said the people had the power to bring down leaders but in Malaysia, such power should be used to topple leaders who did not carry out their duties well.

"That should also be done in a disciplined way and not through rebellion," he said.