

# Mahathir saddened by Gandhi's death

KUCHING, Wed. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he was saddened by the death of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who was killed in a bomb explosion yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said he knew Mr Gandhi personally and was grieved by the incident, adding that he was worried with what was happening in India.

The Prime Minister said the incident had showed that although democracy was the best system, those who practised it must fully understand and adhere to it.

"The purpose of holding elections is to determine who wins and who loses, who forms the government and who becomes the opposition," he said.

Dr Mahathir hoped that the assassination would not be followed by more violence to avenge Mr Gandhi's death.

He said the assassination should be a lesson to Malaysia on the importance of resolving issues through consensus and peaceful means.

A Wisma Putra spokesman said Dr Mahathir has sent a condolence message to Indian Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar.

"The death of yet another world leader at the hands of violence and brutality is an outrage that justly deserves the strongest condemnation," Dr Mahathir said in the message.

He said the late Mr Gandhi would be remembered as a great leader and an illustrious son of India.

"Malaysia will always remember Mr Gandhi for his outstanding contribution to the Commonwealth, the Non-Aligned Movement and world peace.

"The government and people of Malaysia join me in extending to Your Excellency, the government and people of India our deepest condolences and sympathy," Dr Mahathir said.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said any right thinking person would be terribly shocked and saddened by

Mr Gandhi's death.

"He and his family have been a strong participant in the democratic process. I hope people throughout the world will be shocked into standing up for a peaceful democratic process," he said.

Dr Ling said a democratic system should not be allowed to degenerate into a situation where people resorted to violence to achieve what they could not through the ballot.

He said Malaysia should be glad that the country was peaceful, adding that everyone should pray that the situation continued.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said Mr Gandhi's death was a great loss and "this is not the type of death he should have."

"In a democratic country, if violence is going to over-rule democracy, then democracy will die a natural death," he said.

He said democracy was successful in Malaysia because the people here were more mature politically.