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Mahathir-message

DON'T BE MISLED BY WESTERN TAUNTS OF OUR DEMOCRACY, SAYS MAHATHIR

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(EMBARGO: For release at 8.30 tonight, Aug. 30)

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug. 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded the people not to be misled by western taunts about the Malaysian democratic system being not democratic enough.

"Actually, they want us to practise the democracy which brings about instability, economic decline and poverty. With such a situation, they can threaten and control us," the Prime Minister said in his National Day message over radio and television.

He said those who condemned Malaysia saying that "we are not democratic enough want this country to be like the Soviet countries and Yugoslavia which faced disunity, racial riots, elimination of ethnic communities and instability."

While the West urged the countries of the former Soviet Union to become democratic, it was not willing to help, even a little, when riots broke out and the economies of those countries collapsed, he added. -- more

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As such, the people in Malaysia should not be easily influenced by such foreign claims as they wanted Malaysia to remain backward and unable to compete with them so that they could say of us "we are incapable of being independent and administer the country ourselves", he said.

The Prime Minister stressed that Malaysia practised democracy by giving the people the right to elect their representatives freely and this was the most important foundation of democracy.

Absolute freedom was not democracy but anarchy, a situation without law and order, he said.

He added: "Freedom should have its limits as we do not want someone's freedom to become a pressure on someone else and absolute freedom will threaten society.

"If we do not have restrictions on racial politics, racial tension and riots will occur and this is bound to affect the country's stability and progress." -- more

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He said the people should avoid fighting among themselves because the gains from conflicts and riots would amount to nothing compared with the wellbeing that could be wrought by sharing the fruits of various efforts in a peaceful and prosperous atmosphere.

Dr Mahathir said the world had changed much. The Cold War had ended but this did not seem to indicate that the world would become more peaceful and conflicts reduced.

At the same time, world trade continued to become difficult because developed countries which in the past upheld free trade, were today absorbed in restricting trade to avoid competition from the newly industrialising countries of the South, he added.

"We have to overcome this challenge from the developed countries. We have set the objective of becoming a developed country by the year 2020, a developed country having mastered efficiency, administration, trade, knowledge and industry on par with developed countries but retaining noble and clean values," he said. -- more

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Therefore, the theme of the National Day celebrations "Bersatu Menuju Wawasan" was most appropriate, for, to achieve that, the people of the various communities should be of one heart and mind, he added.

It was only through this that "we can ensure that no one can stifle our aspiration to emerge as a developed and free country", he said.

The Prime Minister said National Day was a day for the people to look back on the history of the struggle for independence and the younger generation in particular should know about this struggle so that they would be able to value and preserve the independence.

"This is because if we are not careful, imperialism in a subtle form through economic pressure, cultural influence and so forth can return," he added.

Dr Mahathir hoped through the National Day celebrations, the people would be able to review the progress that had been achieved and value the development efforts since Merdeka. -- Bernama

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