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Mahathir-democracy

MALAYSIA NOT LESS DEMOCRATIC WITH THE BN REPEATEDLY RETURNED TO POWER

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 30<sup>94</sup> (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia is not less democratic just because the Barisan Nasional (BN) is returned to power in each general election.

The Prime Minister said that if the same party was chosen by the people to form the government, it was their democratic right.

"We are just as democratic as any other democratic country," he said when opening the Gerakan's 23rd delegates conference here.

Malaysia, he said, was a democratic country because the people had the choice to replace the government they were not in favour.

He said that there were many benefits to be derived through the people's choice of the BN to form the government each time a general election was held. -- more

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Besides maintaining political stability, it would also ensure that the government's policies were consistent, he said.

He said that due to political stability and consistent policies, foreign investors were attracted to invest in Malaysia.

"Investors are able to plan long-term strategies without having to bother about changes in policies as a result of new governments taking over," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that it could not be denied that Malaysia's current level of success in all fields including the economy was due to, among other things, the same government ruling the country since independence.

"Imagine what will happen if there is no stability because of changes in government everytime a general election is held," he said. -- more

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"Not only will the government policies be changed halfway, the political situation in the country may not even be stable. This can be seen in several countries where there are changes in the government and its policies each time an election is held," he said.

What made the BN unique and special, he said, was its ability to stand the test of time although the BN was made up of several parties with leaders and members of different races and religions.

Dr Mahathir said that since the Alliance, the forerunner of the BN, the party had been able to win the general election time and time again and as such able to form the federal and state governments except in Kelantan and Sabah.

"This is a record for any political party in the world," he said. He said that in the eyes of foreign observers, such a success was amazing and almost beyond belief. -- more

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Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said that they were really amazed at how component parties in the BN could be solidly united and exist in harmony for so long although the parties were represented by various races and interests.

"They predicted that we will disintegrate in no time but they have been proven wrong as the BN is still united and strong.

"We do not have a special formula for the BN's success. BN is successful because the spirit of understanding, compromise and tolerance exists among the leaders and members," he said.

He said that the willingness to give and take and compromise did not mean that there were winners and losers.

"We give and take and compromise for the general good of the country and the people and this overrides all other narrow interests," he said. -- more

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The Prime Minister said that this was the principle upheld and to be forever perpetuated by the BN and was among the reason that the BN attracted continuous support from the people to form the government.

He said that the objective to attain developed nation status set by the government and the BN leaders was not to benefit the BN leaders but in the interest of the people and country.

Dr Mahathir said that actually, some Western nations had, to a certain extent, developed as a result of the assistance of their colonies because during their rule they did not only acquire the wealth of the colonised countries but also turn them into restricted markets for their industrial products.

"We believe that we can attain developed nation status without colonising any country," he said.

"We have up to October next year to hold a general election. Although I have not yet given any thought as to when to hold the general election, the BN is always prepared for it," he said.

He said that opposition parties realised that they did not have any important issues to exploit in this general election but added that it did not mean that they would not create issues.

"If we adhere to the principle of mutual support in the BN, we will be able to ward off all their false allegations," he said. -- Bernama

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