

Western nations envious of us, says Dr M

By James Ritchie and Tan Chin Siang

KUCHING, Tues. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today chided some Western nations which preferred to sow the seeds of instability to impede the progress of developing countries.

"Many countries in the West which practise democracy are envious that we have a strong Government which has the support of the majority of the people. They prefer that we have a Government which changes hands every time we have an election.

"I am not sure whether their keenness to see us change Government after each election is because that is their understanding of democracy or they hope to see us become weak.

"Maybe, they do not want to see the people being governed by a strong Government which could make decisions for the betterment of the people," Dr Mahathir said.

He was addressing a gathering of more than 2,000 at the opening of the new Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) head office and launching of the party's 35th anniversary at Jalan Bako, Petra Jaya, here.

Dr Mahathir said that if Malaysia failed to have a proper administration, some of the Western nations would say: "See, we told you the last time not to ask for independence because it will be difficult to govern your own country."

"If they (the West) see that we are not capable of administering well, then they can say such things. But as it turned out in Malaysia, our development after independence has been much faster than many countries, including the developed ones."

He said that Malaysia had shown the West that it was capable of administering the country much better than its colonial predecessors.

The country is now the most progressive among developing countries, with an annual economic growth of more than eight per cent. Its economy has shifted from one of exporting raw materials to that of an industrialised one where about 70 per cent of its current exports were manufactured goods.

Dr Mahathir said he believed Malaysians were capable of improving their level of skills and achieving greater success than at present.

"The important thing is for us to believe in our own abilities ... we have the *Malaysia Boleh* slogan because we are as capable as anyone.

"Whether you are a Malay, Chinese, or Indian, so long as you learn and strive in whatever you do, you will master it no matter how sophisticated the thing may be.

"If we continue to work at it, we can one day stand shoulder to shoulder with those from the developed countries," he said.

Earlier, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, who is PBB presi-

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① Mahathir

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Taib: PBB brought all races together

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dent, said the Barisan Nasional has been able to achieve all its success because of the solidarity of all its component parties.

He said that in the past 34 years of PBB's existence, the party has been able to bring all Bumiputera races together under one umbrella and was able to work closely with the other non-Bumiputera parties such as the Sarawak United Peoples' Party and Sarawak National Party.