

'Frequent changes will spell trouble'

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JOHOR BAKU, Wed. — Changing Governments every five years in the name of democracy would spell trouble for the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said democracy in the Malaysian context should instead stand for continuity, as this was imperative for sustained progress and development.

He said Malaysia's achievement of impressive economic growth and all-round development would not have been possible if the former Alliance and present Barisan Nasional Governments had not been returned to power since independence.

"Democracy alone is not enough because it does not translate into development automatically. For development to thrive, there must be proper planning, vision and co-ordination.

"That is why continuity of Government is important. If there is a change of Government every five years, there will be chaos in the country," he said at a "leader-with-the-people" gathering attended by more than 5,000 people at the SRK (C) Kuo Kuong School in Taman Ungku Tun Aminah here today.

Also present were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, Youth and Sports Minister Ghani Othman, Law Minister Datuk Syed

Hamid Albar, State Executive Councillors and Johor Barisan Nasional candidates in the general election.

Dr Mahathir said countries like Italy and the United States which changed Governments often were at a standstill economically today because there was no continuity in Government policies and programmes.

"Since the Second World War, there has been 70 changes of Government in Italy. Because of this, there is no positive economic agenda or development programme in the country.

"Similarly, in the US, the President is changed every eight years. It takes two years for the new President to learn the ropes. But by the time he is ready to push for reform, he is in his second term and there is little he can do as a lame duck President," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this was why the people should vote for continuity in the Government, adding that the BN had served well and fulfilled its promises and pledges to the people.

He warned that "democracy in the wrong hands could spell trouble for the country" and urged the people to discern carefully the good from the bad in this election.

"We have peace, progress and prosperity in the country today because the BN Government has laid the necessary foundation over the last 38 years for a strong economy, sustained growth and all-round development.

"But the BN needs another

mandate from the people to plan for the future and to lead the country to greater heights in all fields of development," he said.

On the incident in Petaling Jaya yesterday, where the DAP had publicly burned copies of *The Star* newspaper because of alleged "biased reporting", Dr Mahathir said the incident showed that the DAP had little respect for the Press freedom it kept talking about.

"The DAP has yet to win the election, yet they are already burning newspapers. If they were to form the next Government, they will probably burn all the national papers," he said.

"If they (the DAP) are true advocates of Press freedom, they should give the public the freedom to criticise the party when necessary."

Later, launching the "Dana Johor", a unit trust scheme which is open to both Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras in Muar, Dr Mahathir said the method of wealth distribution by the Barisan Nasional Government, including through unit trust schemes, was not only fair but also the best.

The approach, which was devised by the BN, had enabled people of all races and the poor to benefit from the nation's economic development.

He said the Government's aim was to expand the economic cake so that every one had a larger share, which differed from both the Communist and Socialist systems, whereby wealth was taken away from the

rich and given to the poor.

Unit trust schemes like Amanah Saham Nasional, Amanah Saham Bumiputera and others had even enabled the poor to invest in giant enterprises listed on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange.

The Prime Minister said under the Communist regime, properties were repossessed and private enterprises nationalised. But State-owned enterprises eventually lost money and what the people got was equality in terms of poverty.

He said the Socialist system was no better. It taxed heavily the rich on the pretext of wealth distribution, but successful entrepreneurs eventually lost interest in expanding their businesses.

"Our system is the best, not through taking from the rich and giving to the poor because it will kill the interest to do business.

"Like the goose that lays the golden eggs, it is better to take good care of the goose than to slaughter it," he added.

Dr Mahathir added that the economic success of the country was not accidental. Rather, it was achieved through efficient and prudent planning.

He said unit trust schemes were not only the best and easiest way for the poor to invest, but were also a safe form of investment, offering attractive returns as these schemes were managed by experts in the field.

"We do not want the risks to be held by the poor (investors)."