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Attitudinal change in electorate a tribute to nation's growth success

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IT seems clear that the candidates to be chosen to stand for the coming general election will be picked based on their performance and credibility.

This certainly will be a winning formula, as the electorates these days are far more critical and their expectations far higher.

This attitudinal change is itself a tribute to the country's success in development.

When a society's expectation of their representatives increases, this is a sure sign of political maturity and that the country is heading in the right direction.

Power is an interesting concept. In the context of democracy, there is what is often referred to as the paradox of power.

Essentially, in higher forms of democracy, the more power you have, the more you have to share and to consult.

Within the context of being a people's representative one needs to be much more accountable and representative of one's constituency.

Gone are the days when MPs could remain aloof and be detached from his or her constituency.

They cannot only surface and appear to be everywhere once every five years. The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has made it clear that the candidacy for this general election is based on suitability and performance over the last few years.

Representatives for tomorrow will need to humble themselves and be truly seen as the servant rather than the master.

The traditional notion of power and its employment is changing. As this changes, so too will the people's perception.

Sometimes, the people place the representatives on a high pedestal, giving them a higher elevation than they deserve. With time representatives, can no longer expect such treatment from the people.

This is not necessarily a negative development, but reflects a higher degree of sophistication of the population and must be attributed to the prevailing open system that we all enjoy.

There are many aspects to this `humbling process, and this includes behavioural. Representatives will need to mingle with the ordinary folks more often, for example, by taking public transport and go through what most of the population undergo on a daily basis.

They should reflect, at least in form, of what they try to promote. For instance, it is most unfortunate that when officials preside over functions to promote local products, they parade with imported products, including arriving to the function in imported cars.

This does not generate the kind of confidence amongst the people when the officials themselves do not believe in the goodness of our products. The government has been very generous to its officials by providing them with chauffeur-driven cars.

Only with the recent crisis did officials have to change to Proton cars. Previously, they used to drive vehicles ranging from Mercedes Benz to Volvos.

It is most gratifying to see the Prime Minister being proud to drive locally produced cars.

It is amazing that other government officials have not followed suit and it took the crisis for them to be forced to follow.