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Dr M: People will determine the Government

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said some foreigners were spreading lies that the Government no longer enjoyed popular support and the people wanted to bring it down.

But the results of the Sabah election showed that the Barisan Nasional Government still enjoyed the support of the people, he said.

"Actually, they wanted to see me removed and replaced by someone who will bow to them, who will sell the country. That is why they initiated efforts to topple the Government," he said at the 50th anniversary celebrations of Jinjang New Village today.

Dr Mahathir said foreigners could continue with their efforts to topple the Government but this was not worrying as in the end, it would be the people who would determine the fate and future of the country.

"They can always try but I leave it to the people to determine the Government and not some foreigners, foreign magazines, (United States' Vice-President) Al Gore or foreign Governments.

"We are a democracy. It will be the responsibility of the majority of the people to pick their Government ... outsiders have no right. Malaysians know better how to run the country."

Gore had in a speech during the Apec Business Advisory Council dinner last year voiced support for street demonstrations in support of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Dr Mahathir expressed confidence that the majority of the people supported the Barisan Nasional Government, saying the coalition was expected to do well in the next general election.

He said the undivided support of the people had enabled the Government to defend the country from outside interference.

"When we have a strong Government, we can stand tall and protect ourselves unlike in some other countries where the Governments have to submit to demands by foreigners."

Dr Mahathir spoke at great length on the reasons why new villages were established before independence.

He said many residents, especially those staying near the jungle then, were often threatened by communists.

Out of fear, they were forced to provide assistance although they knew the British Government then would take stern action against those caught doing so, he said.

As a way out, the British Government decided that the people needed to be relocated in a security area, thus giving birth to new villages.

Dr Mahathir, who related an encounter with a foreigner who thought Malaysia's new villages were similar to concentration camps established by the Nazis during World War II, said the people could judge for themselves the truth of this and the progress that had been made in new villages.

"If these places are indeed concentration camps, surely there will not be any 50th anniversary celebration like what we are having here today."

He said those who likened new villages to concentration camps obviously did not know the country's history. He said the development attained by new villages was made possible because the people had elected a responsible Government, one which considered the interests of all races.

Compared to conditions 50 years ago, he said new villages today had water and electricity supply, schools and roads, while various industries had also sprouted in these areas.

"All these can only be done through a caring Government. We want the people to be more prosperous, have jobs with better wages and have their businesses doing well so that one day we will be equal with the Western and developed countries.

"Our multi-racial society lives in peace and has no fear unlike in some other countries where the people are worried even to congregate like what we are doing now, fearing that clashes or disturbances will erupt."

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians were leading a better life today through the efforts of the people who had elected a Government that was sensitive to their well-being.

He said Malaysians had also realised that they could do as well or better compared with other people, citing as examples the successful staging of the Commonwealth Games, the completion of the world-class Formula One circuit in Sepang and the success of Malaysians in conquering Mount Everest and the North Pole.

"All these show that with the right spirit, we can succeed."

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