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Ingrates may hamper nation's development, says Dr M

Farush Khan in Dhaka

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad fears that efforts to develop the country may be hampered by ingratitude among the younger generation for the wealth and prosperity they currently enjoy.

The Prime Minister said some of those born "amid wealth and high-rise buildings" took things for granted, failing to realise and appreciate efforts to develop the country.

"I am worried that because of this, our objective to develop the country (effectively) may not be achieved," he said at a dinner hosted by the Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Datuk Zulkifly Ab Rahman on Sunday night.

About 120 Malaysians, comprising officers and staff of the High Commission, students and those working here, attended the dinner. Also present were Dr Mahathir's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

Dr Mahathir said the younger generation would be thankful for the comfortable life in Malaysia if they reflected on the tough living conditions and lack of development in some countries.

He made clear that the people were free to elect the Government they wished, but not to initiate change through riots and demonstrations.

This was because such a situation would make it impossible for the Government to safeguard the country from re-colonisation and being dictated to by foreign powers.

"Do not think that when a Government is toppled and another comes to power, the new Government can run the country well. In fact, this only provokes the Opposition to bring down the new Government."

He said events in some countries had shown that internal squabbles and unrest had only led to economic and political instability.

This led to them being dictated to by the big powers even though new Governments were often voted in one after another, he said.

Dr Mahathir said there were already attempts by the big powers to cause chaos in Malaysia and weaken its economy through negative reports.

He said this was to create a situation where no one would be willing to provide funds to the country.

The Prime Minister said other attempts to weaken the country included the incorporation of major companies in various sectors and efforts to buy over big companies in Malaysia.

"They want to weaken us but we will not bow to them. But if there are riots and demonstrations, we cannot protect ourselves.

"I am not trying to gempar (instil fear), but if we fight among ourselves, we will be re-colonised."

He said a weak country would have to beg from others and freedom would be meaningless to its people.

"We do not (beg). And for that we must be thankful."

Last night, Dr Mahathir and his wife attended a state banquet hosted by Bangladeshi President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban, his official residence.

Dr Mahathir is in Bangladesh to attend the Group of Eight Islamic Developing Countries summit.

The summit will be capped by the adoption of the Dhaka Declaration today.

The Prime Minister will return to Malaysia tomorrow.

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