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PM: No partisan politics (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The country and its people will ultimately suffer if administrative and diplomatic officers practise partisan politics and lack professionalism, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said the separation from partisan politics was important to ensure that the Government's policies and projects which were for the people's benefit were implemented and not "thwarted" by personal beliefs.

Dr Mahathir said if this happened, the Government would lose its effectiveness since there would always be elements in the administration that would try to bring down the Government of the day.

"The Government machinery will be ineffective no matter which party rules. The victims will be the country and the people," he said at the Administrative and Diplomatic Services Association dinner at the Palace of the Golden Horses tonight.

He said when the country's development efforts were hindered, the officers would also feel the effects.

"That is the reason why administrative professionalism is important for whoever forms the Government - the administration must implement all programmes and policies of the Government.

"Personal opinions on politics cannot be taken into account or influence the implementation of Government decisions."

Fortunately, Dr Mahathir said, the country's administrative officers were aware that if there were those among them who were active participants in promoting the Opposition, the same could happen if the Opposition were in power.

Dr Mahathir also stressed that the country's development success was testimony to the Malaysian administrative officers' professionalism over the years.

"Even if there are those who are not professional, their numbers are small. I believe administrators in Malaysia will continue to remain professional for the sake of the country and its people."

Dr Mahathir also stressed that the country's administrative machinery had a duty to remain focused on fulfilling the needs of the people.

This, he said, could not have been achieved if the civil servants were weak or had indulged in partisan politics.

He added that the country's administrative machinery had also evolved from its early adaptation of the British civil service model which lacked "closeness" to the people and was "elitist" in nature.

"This foundation was not suitable for a country that practised democracy where the people ruled over the Government."

He said the British model also created opportunities for bias and discrimination where officers had the power to promote their favourite people and bring down those they disliked.

"To fulfil the demands of the people, the elitist British administrative system can no longer be used."

Dr Mahathir also paid tribute to the administrative and diplomatic officers who did not create problems when the Government was grappling with the recent economic crisis.

"Although their pay was not as much as before, some of their allowances were stopped, although no bonus was paid and no pay revision was done, civil servants at all levels did not make unnecessary demands and even welcomed the cost cutting measures by the Government."

He added that due to this support, the Government was able to create its own methods in overcoming the crisis.

Dr Mahathir added as the country was moving towards recovery, the Government would not only reinstate the allowances and benefits of the officers which were taken away but also improve their purchasing power.

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