

Only doom sayers like Kit Siang predict social chaos: Dr M

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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he does not believe in the prediction of impending social chaos in the country.

This has been forwarded by doom sayers like DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang who had e-mailed him on the matter, he told reporters after opening the conference.

He said: "I don't believe in his analysis. They have been telling us, the foreign press and others, that this country cannot be peaceful, that the Chinese and Malays will fight each other.

"They have been saying that for the last 30 years and they will

keep on saying it. But nothing has happened."

Mahathir said the government is always concerned about racial integration and harmony, and will not allow a situation to develop into a stage where it is impossible to reverse.

"That is why when people try to play on this racial issue, we tackle it very early on," he added.

In his opening speech, Mahathir reminded Malaysians to remain alert to negative elements such as racial and religious extremists who can ruin racial harmony in the country.

He said the people must en-

sure that narrow-minded groups and militants do not jeopardise the nation's long-term development objectives.

He cited the recent arms heist in Grik, Perak, as an example of something Malaysians would expect to only happen elsewhere, but had now become a reality in the country.

On a recent polemic on the rights of a certain group, he said such feelings of dissatisfaction exist in all-races, and although they can be discussed, it must be done behind closed doors.

An open debate will lead to uncontrolled emotions that could result in racial riots where

all sides would lose, he said.

Asked to comment on former MCA president Tan Sri Lee San Choon's statement that he was "stabbed in the back" when contesting the Seremban parliamentary seat in 1982 because not many Malays voted for him, Mahathir said, "I wouldn't want to comment. But I know that I campaigned for Lee in the election to defeat the opposition candidate Dr Chen Man Hin (the then DAP chairman).

"I still remember the speech I made. I said Lee San Choon doesn't have to shout to tell me anything as he is seated next to me; he whispers it and I will hear."