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Dr Mahathir advises Sarawak not 'to throw away a good thing'

KUCHING, Fri. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has advised the people of Sarawak not "to throw away a good thing", in reference to the Barisan Nasional State Government which has brought much peace, stability and economic growth to the State.

"I hope the people will realise this ...you have a good Government which has performed," he said in his speech at a dinner at the State Assembly building here.

"Sarawak has remained peaceful and harmonious. This should be maintained. Don't be influenced by people who say that any change is good. I can tell you that some changes are very bad.

"If there is no necessity to change, why change?"

The dinner was hosted by the Sarawak State Government for Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan Nasional chairman.

Also at the dinner were Dr Mahathir's wife, Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud and his wife, Puan Sri Laila.

Dr Mahathir said in a democratic system, elections gave the people the opportunity to throw out anyone they thought was not performing.

But he pointed out that doing so everytime there was an election would not help bring much development to the country.

Dr Mahathir said there were some countries where new political parties got elected at every election but this did not bring positive results.

"When people exercise their right to 'overthrow' a Government and choose a new one everytime there is an election, the country is unable to develop because the Government does not get to stay long enough to develop the country."

Dr Mahathir said, in jest, that he was speaking from experience, having stayed as Prime Minister for four terms.

"Well the first five years, I was thinking about how I should go about developing Malaysia. The second five years, I began doing something about developing Malaysia. The third five years, you see results. The last five years, I don't know what.

"Maybe people get tired of me. But that's alright. If I had stayed for only five years, I would have not been able to do much," he said.

Dr Mahathir said in some countries, where a leader stayed for only one term, he could not achieve much.

"The first two years, he is trying to learn about the business. The next two years, he tries to do something and the last year, he tries but nobody cares because he is on his way out and a new Government is coming in."

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia which practised democracy had many political parties which were allowed to express their dissatisfaction through the proper channels.

He said this situation showed that in such a multi-racial country, the Government could not please everybody and each group was unhappy about something.

"That's okay. When you find all the races are slightly unhappy, then you are doing the right thing. When anyone one group is too happy, then you can be sure that you are doing the wrong thing. You are favouring one at the expense of others."

Earlier, Taib thanked the Prime Minister for having helped steer the country out of the economic crisis and bring it it back on track.

In an dialogue with leaders of the State component parties earlier, Dr Mahathir urged them to remain united and co-operate with each other to face the coming State election.

Dr Mahathir also reminded them to resolve any internal problems for the sake of unity, Barisan Nasional secretary-general Datuk Seri Mohamad Rahmat said today.

The parties are Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu, Sarawak United People's Party, Sarawak National Party and Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak.

When asked whether the dialogue had touched on when the State election would be held, Mohamad said Dr Mahathir had advised the component parties to remain united.

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