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Mahathir-Change

DON'T BE SWAYED BY CALLS TO CHANGE GOV'T, VARSITY STUDENTS TOLD

JOHOR BAHRU, Aug 24 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded Malaysians, especially students in tertiary learning institutions, not to be carried away by calls to change the present government for a better government to run the country.

The prime minister said they should not be over confident that a change of government would pave the way for a better administration.

"We have seen in other countries where governments were toppled supposedly to set up a better government," he said.

Eventually, the new government was found to be no any better than expected, he said when addressing students and staff of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) in Skudai, near here.

In fact, it happened in several countries the new government that came to power was more tyrannical to the people than the alleged cruelty perpetrated by the previous administration, he said.

Dr Mahathir said again they changed the government only to end up with an even worse government.

He linked this to the former colonial powers still keen on interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries on the excuse that other countries were undemocratic, do not respect human rights, no press freedom, no freedom of speech and barred demonstrations.

"But actually, these are mere excuses, if we were to be under them, they also would not give freedom to us.

"We know if they are under attack..they also took actions ignoring the law and the court, take actions to their whims and fancies against people who they think was involved in violence," he said.

Dr Mahathir said whatever they said were merely "shows" to justify their actions to meddle in the affairs of other countries with the intention of re-colonising the country.

Dr Mahathir said it was unfortunate that sometimes Malaysians too were carried away by the arguments of foreigners to the extent that Malaysians talked and accused their own country of not respecting human rights and no freedom of expression.

"We are also carried away by the foreigners' opinion and we, directly or indirectly, become their tools...we try to topple our own government supposedly to be replaced with a better government," he said.

Stressing that this reality was not a fairy tale, he said, colonisation of the old fashion by using military power to conquer other countries might not happen again but a new form of colonisation could take place through economic colonisation.

"They can colonise us merely by making us poor and this was tried by them in 1997, through a very easy method, only by selling, selling and selling our ringgit in large quantities till the value of our ringgit dwindled," he said.

Dr Mahathir said when Malaysia became poor, they would offer financial aid on condition it hands over the financial management to them and with that, Malaysia would lose its independence.

Dr Mahathir said a country whose economy was colonised had to depend on the colonial masters who would try to dictate whom they like to be the country's leader.

"They will determine who will be the leader in our country..we can see in Palestine, they dislike Yasser Arafat and try to replace him, in Iraq

they don't like Saddam Hussein and are executing plans to topple him.

"Is it not possible for them to try to change the leadership of our country?... At that time, we will not be free anymore, conquered by a foreign power," he said.

Earlier, speaking at a national-level school student leaders gathering in Pasir Gudang, Dr Mahathir also spoke of colonisation in the globalisation era where big countries want all other countries to open their markets and economy so that they could do what they like.

"They want to enter our country under the pretext of bringing in their capital and technology so that we will become rich from the so-called opportunities created by them.

"But we have seen our easily they can threaten the freedom of our country," he added.

At the UTM function, Dr Mahathir, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and the university's Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Zulkifli Mohd Ghazali joined more than 8,000 students and staff to sing patriotic song "Kerlanamu Malaysia" by waving miniature Jalur Gemilang flags.

Dr Mahathir and Abdul Ghani were given a rousing applause by the audience when they shouted Merdeka! Merdeka! several times in conjunction with the 45th Merdeka Day celebrations next Saturday.

-- BERNAMA

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