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Mahathir-Democracy

DR M: M'SIA CHIDED FOR NOT PRACTISING LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

SHAH ALAM, April 15 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's democratic system is often criticised by ethnic European democratic countries for not being liberal like them, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said there were Malaysians who felt embarrassed by the criticisms.

Malaysians should realise the democracy practised in Malaysia was for the good of the country and the people, he said.

"The country and its people should not be sacrificed for democracy.

"We've seen how liberal democracies have destroyed cultures, morals and religions. We need not legalise the destructions in the name of democracy.

"We should take what is good and discard the bad," he said in his acceptance speech after being conferred a Honorary Doctorate in Political Science and Government by Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM).

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail, who is UiTM Chancellor, conferred the doctorate at the university's commemorative convocation.

Dr Mahathir said the people should be wise in political knowledge and must be clever to differentiate between "glass and jewel" if they wished to enjoy prosperity from the power they have to elect a government in a democratic system of governance.

The government and politics cannot be separated, he said, adding that an inefficient government is the result of unhealthy politics.

Dr Mahathir said the smooth conduct of general elections and formation of government in Malaysia might give an impression that the political process and democratic administration were easy but actually it is not that easy.

He said democracy was a very difficult system and exposed to the possibilities of corruption, chaos and anarchy.

Killings and all sorts of crimes that occurred in several developing countries which tried to practise democratic system were proof of how

difficult and dangerous democratic practices can be, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the people's level of maturity in understanding the limits and constraints of democracy would determine whether democracy would bring good or bad.

He said the belief that the voice of the majority was holy (Vox Populi Vox Dei - voice of the majority, voice of God) promoted by advocates of democracy in Europe was not always true.

"Usually, the voice of the majority is not based on truth or rational thinking. More often it is swayed by emotions and interests of a particular class or race," he said.

He said the Labour Government was so pro-workers that their salaries and perks were increased so often to the extent that the country's products were not competitive in the market.

This led to an economic downturn with the closing down of industries and many losing their jobs, he added.

-- BERNAMA

LES TOM