

**Mahathir: Blame BN leaders, not the system**  
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The concept of a coalition government with the representation of all races in the country is still a "good system", former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad says

He blamed the problems and discontent over the past few years not on the system, but on the policies of the leaders who have administrated the government.

"It's not the BN which is wrong, it is the policies that are followed," said Mahathir.

He was speaking at the launch of the Chinese-language version of his autobiography 'A Doctor In The House: The Memoirs Of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad' at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

"As you know, under the concept of a coalition government, in which all the races participate and where we agreed that no one (race) should get everything (they) are entitled to and everybody must make sacrifices - under that system of coalition government, we prospered for almost 50 years," he said.

Mahathir was responding to a question from the floor on whether the BN government needed to change in terms of its outlook.

The former prime minister of 22 years added that unlike other nations with a multiracial composition, Malaysia is "well ahead" in harnessing racial harmony and avoiding "conflicts, confrontations and violence".

**'Blame poor leaders'**

The "BN system" is a good system, he reiterated, but as the leaderships changes, policies that are implemented also change.

"Sometimes the change is for the good, it improves the situation. But sometimes the change is for the wrong reasons and then the country will not prosper," he said.

Last day of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Najib Abdul Razak takes over as prime minister in Putrajaya. Mahathir hinted scathingly at the drastic shift in policies by his handpicked successor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (left, in orange).

"As you know, when I stepped down the policies took a 190 degree turn and when they did that of course the economy and even race relations in Malaysia deteriorated," said Mahathir, alluding to his successor.

Abdullah, upon assuming power, almost immediately began cancelling some of Mahathir's white elephant megaprojects, the Singapore-Malaysia 'crooked' bridge and the double track project, among others.

**'Wise' even when I said silly things'**

He also attempted to institute some badly needed reforms, such as the IPCMC, before pressure from within the party forced him to back down and eventually step down in favour of his successor, Najib Abdul Razak.

The polls group Merdeka Centre's poll, conducted between May 24 and June 8, 2011, to gauge voter perception of the state of ethnic relations in the country, has indicated that race relations has dipped since 2006.

The pollster said the dismal result was possibly due to intensified media coverage on race and religious politics, as well as the impact of incidents post-2008, including arson attacks on places of worship, public

discontent over racially-biased school textbooks and controversial statements by public personalities.

On a lighter note, Mahathir talked about the change of his career from a doctor to becoming a politician. "Actually, I was a politician first, only then I become a doctor," he said to the amusement about 100 present.

"You see, only when you have a university qualification or a title, people will listen to you. I was as intelligent without having to become a doctor, as I am after I became a doctor but no one cares about someone without a degree.

After spending six years of his youth studying to become a certified medical practitioner, he pursued his passion for politics.

"When I came back (after studies), even if I said silly things, people thought it was very wise (but) truth to be told, I find the training of a doctor is very good for politicians," said Mahathir, adding that his medical vocation had assisted him in solving problems in public administration.

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