

**Dr M: Smarter electorate giving gov't headaches**  
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**by Nigel Aw**

Former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the government must adapt to the changing environment and respond to an electorate that is increasingly intelligent.

"Today in this age, we are dealing with a very clever opposition. They are willing to question you, if they are not happy with what you do."

He joked that it was much more convenient for the people to be "slightly less intelligent" as they would not question the government but the reality is that intelligent people are required for the people's development.

"So we give a lot of scholarship and build universities... You can imagine there are hardly any idiots left in Malaysia, this gives the government a headache.

"The government must now understand this new environment where people are as clever as the government," he said to a room full of foreign delegates and ambassadors in a pre-Umno General Assembly event in Kuala Lumpur today.

Alternative media is a problem

He added that while absolute freedom will create problems, the government must still react to such demands and determine the appropriate level of freedom for the people.

"Freedom has got their limits but the problem is determining the limits."

This is said, was coupled with the advent of communication technology, something that was less challenging during his time.

"Information technology is a headache for everyone. Fortunately during my time they were not so sophisticated but the present government faces not so much from the newspapers and television but it is the alternative media that is the problem."

However, Mahathir reiterated that the government has begun to respond to these forces of change.

"For Malaysia, we are trying to do a lot of transformation and I hope the government will succeed in transforming the economy and society itself and I hope by doing so we will continue to be supported by the people of this country."

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