

## **Dr M wants limits to freedom, has second thoughts on Net**

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**By Hazlan Zakaria**

Malaysians must learn to live with less freedoms if they want to build a better Malaysia, former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We must tone down our freedom, control ourselves, and self-regulate," he told the audience at a talk in Kuala Lumpur today.

This, he explained, is because too much freedom means more opportunities for irresponsible parties to misuse and exploit those freedoms, thus causing instability.

Speaking at the session dubbed 'Better times for Malaysian politics, post-GE13?', he pointed to sensitive racial issues being mentioned more and more nowadays, because stern laws like the Internal Security Act (ISA) are no longer in place.

Mahathir also expressed regrets that his guarantee of no Internet controls in the Malaysian Multimedia Super Corridor charter, has led to abuses.

"I am now having second thoughts," he said.

If we have absolute freedoms, it may be abused and thus, we shouldn't allow too much freedom, Mahathir argued.

He reiterated his view that Malaysia needs a strong government to ensure stability, since the government as a rule will need a majority in Parliament and the support to do unpleasant, yet necessary things.

'Less than popular' laws

This includes passing laws which may be 'less than popular', or taking stern measures.

"We are civilised people, but sometimes the things that we do seem uncivilised."

He pointed to the unregulated freedoms of the US' financial sector - which had led to the global crash - as one example of why the government must continue to have its finger in many pies.

In his speech, Mahathir also obliquely chastised opposition party PKR for their continuous contentious stance against the GE13 election results and fraud allegations, despite the opposition having made great strides in the polls.

While not naming them, he praised DAP and PAS for being more sensible in accepting the GE13 results.

"The opposition has matured... though the opposition leader may not be there for long,"he joked.

He told the opposition to be mindful of making much of their protest as it might "disrupt our stability".

Mahathir said that while it is the job of the opposition to provide checks and balances to the government by being a mirror to the ruling coalition, it should do so judiciously.

"This (the PKR-led Pakatan opposition) is a cracked mirror. Even a beautiful person would look ugly in it," he sniped.

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