

## **Dr M: Rising racial tension threatens peace**

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During Dr Mahathir Mohamad's era, those who crossed the line were detained under the now repealed Internal Security Act and the nation was enveloped in a climate of fear.

But the situation has since changed, and following two successive electoral bruising, BN is a shadow of what it was during Mahathir's reign as prime minister.

And this weakness, Mahathir noted, has contributed to racial tension in Malaysia reaching a new level.

"Taking advantage of liberalisation and the weakened BN government, the conflict between the races has heated up," he said in his blog.

The patron of Malay right-wing movement Perkasa, who has repeatedly called for the ISA to be reinstated, lamented that the people showed no respect for the government.

"Malaysians by and large are not violent people. But for how long can Malaysia remain stable in the face of persistent violation of the good understanding and the sharing of power among the races.

"Malaysians, be they Malays, Chinese, Indians or the native of Sabah and Sarawak must banish from their minds the idea of racial dominance. This country must be shared and shared fair by all the races," Mahathir said.

Ironically, Mahathir has often been criticised of stoking racial tension himself.

After delving into the history regarding the birth of the Alliance and the 1969 racial riots, Mahathir, in his latest posting, also spoke about the current political scenario.

Fair sharing of political power must end

He pointed out that after winning the biggest majority ever (199 out of 222 parliamentary seats), the BN government, under Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, decided to accede to popular demands and adopted a more liberal attitude towards both politics and the economic sector.

"In other words, the idea of fair sharing of political power and economic wealth between the different races should be terminated.

"It believed that this would make it more popular. The opposition would have no issues with which to attack the BN," he said.

But in the 2008 general election, Mahathir said, it was manifestly clear that BN had lost popularity instead.

"It scored less than two-thirds for the first time since 1969, gaining only 140 of the 222 seats. The pro-sharing Malays were dismayed but despite changing their leader, they found that the trend towards liberalisation remained," he added.

Mahathir said the new leadership of Najib Abdul Razak believed that Chinese support would return if the sharing policies of the NEP were not implemented.

"Despite obviously rejecting the sharing principle, support for BN did not return. Instead DAP dangled before the Chinese the possibility of having both political and economic dominance.

"This was deemed possible because the Malays had split into three parties and each one of them needed Chinese support in order to win. The Chinese had the deciding vote and were in a position to give victory only to those who believe in throwing out the sharing concept," he added.

The slogan "Ini kalilah" (this time we can), Mahathir said, was used to indicate that political power could be wrested from BN and the opposition would form the next government.

"This opposition government would discard the sharing principle.

"Many non-Malay supporters of the BN component parties were convinced that by withdrawing their support, BN would lose and so would the idea of sharing political and economic power among the races," he added.

