

Dr M on democracy and sore losers
Malaysiakini.com
Nov 23, 2009

Democracy is the best system for politics ever invented by man, according to former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

But being invented by man, he noted, the system is not free from imperfections. "It works only if you know these imperfections and their limitations," said the 84-year-old politician.

"It is fine to determine everything by majority vote and not by consensus. It is fine only if the loser accepts the winner.

"But when the loser refuses to accept the decision of the majority and launches a campaign to undermine the party, the only result would be a split and therefore a weakening of the party," he wrote in his [Cetdet](#) blog.

Umno's 1987 crisis

Mahathir also turned the clock back to 1987 when Umno witnessed a deep split due to the tussle between him and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

In that year's party elections, Mahathir clung on to the presidency by defeating Tengku Razaleigh by a mere 41 votes.

"With Umno the loser took the case to court and the party was made illegal. "When revived it lost a huge chunk of the members," said the former president of 22 years.

The court had declared the elections null and void, and ruled that Umno was illegal, leading Mahathir to swiftly register Umno Baru.

During this brief period, MCA president Dr Ling Liong Sik was made caretaker prime minister.

Mahathir said if Ling, who also headed Barisan Nasional, had accepted Umno splinter - Semangat 46 - formed by Tengku Razaleigh and not Umno Baru, "life would have been difficult for me."

"Fortunately, the voters in the general election restored Umno Baru's credibility and strength. Otherwise Umno Baru would have become Peking Duck, deader than the Dodo," he added.

Learn from history

History has many lessons for us, said Mahathir in quoting the words of George Santayana that those who forget the lessons of history would be punished by making the same mistakes over and over again.

"But we never like to learn from history. We think our case is different. "No. Actually our case is the same. You can interpret this any way you like," he added.

Mahathir's comments come amidst an intense leadership strife in MCA, which is threatening to rip apart the second largest BN component party.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/118089>