

## **The Good and the Nonsense of Liberal Media - by Dr M**

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KUALA LUMPUR - Dr Mahathir Mohamad believes that the government can gain from a liberal media because of the good that comes with the "nonsense" it puts out.

The former Prime Minister said Monday the government must accept that the media is more liberal now than it was before and use it to understand what the people are thinking.

"There are a lot of nonsense coming out from the media now but there are also good ideas. If the government takes the media seriously then it can actually benefit from what is being put on the media," he said in his keynote address at the International Forum held on the eve of the Umno general assembly.

Speaking on "The Creation of Global Citizen: Media Liberalisation and New Political Realities," Dr Mahathir said the media has become almost uncontrolled due to the advances of technology, but it can be handled in a certain way.

"Of course it becomes very difficult but it is not too bad because the government has to be on their toes to make sure they do the right thing. If they don't, the media can be very critical. If the media makes false accusations, the government should reply," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the way to handle the situation is for the government to see whether what the media is saying is worth adopting. If suggestions by the media are to be rejected, good reason must be given, he added.

Dr Mahathir said the government may hope that the media will regulate itself but that is a "hopeless hope" as there will always be irresponsible people who will abuse their access to the media.

He said the government need to be very careful because other people are controlling the media for their own benefit, not for the country's interest.

"The government can be removed but we don't have elections for any personnel who runs the media. Who choose the owner of the newspaper, sub editors, editors and journalist? Do we have elections for editors?"

Dr Mahathir said: "We know a lot of newspapers or magazines are owned by certain people, Rupert Murdoch, for example. Do you imagine that he is not controlling his press for his own interest or the interest of the people whom he wants to protect."

He said the government must expose blatant abuse of the media by the people who have their own agenda.

The media is always controlled, if not by the government, some other people, Dr Mahathir said. - Bernama

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