

Dr M: General Election Should Not Be Held Until 2012
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KOTA KINABALU -- Former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday that the general election should not be held until at least 2012.

"The government has got time. I think it can go on until 2012," he told reporters, when asked to comment on speculation that the 13th general election would be held in November this year.

Dr Mahathir said that many people still did not understand the "Malaysian situation".

"We must explain to them our unique situation so they can choose the good candidates. But we still find extremists who don't understand democracy and make unreasonable demands," he said.

"At the moment racists are playing up issues that tend to divide the people. You have to reduce the role of racists and extremists."

Dr Mahathir said there were some people who were fanatical and blindly supported a bad leader.

"You end up with a bad leader. People must be able to discern bad and good leaders. That's why we need time," he said.

Nevertheless, he said, if the situation was so very good and the BN was sure to win, then it would be the right time.

He said that he had come to this view because of the outcome of the Sarawak election.

Dr Mahathir said it was necessary for the government not to allow the term to run till the very end as first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman did.

To do so would be to lose the element of surprise, he added.

Mahathir later gave a talk in conjunction with the 8th annual general meeting of the Malaysian Council of Ex-Elected Representatives

(Bernama)