

Continued

Mahathir: Wait until next polls

Sheikh Shahariar Zaman

Either boycotting or rejecting election will not help the democratic process to work, the visiting former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohammad said yesterday.

"If you boycott election, you reject the results and you question everything, then it will not work at all," Mahathir, who led government in Malaysia for 22 years, told a press conference.

The Malaysian leader arrived in Dhaka on Saturday to attend the 2nd convocation of University of Information Technology and Sciences (UITS) held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

"There is a need for us to accept that the system is not meant for us to win, it's meant for the nation to win," Mahathir said.

Whoever gets the support of the people for the next five years, others have to let that person or that party rule the country, he said.

"If you question that, if you take to the streets, then when you win and set up the government, the same thing will happen and what you will get is of course anarchy and inability to be stable and without stability you can never develop the country.

"So, we need to wait until the next election before you begin to change the government. But, if you take to the streets, then there will be no government," Mahathir said.

About the manpower situation in Malaysia he said, "We have problems not only with Bangladesh, we have problems with Indonesia, with many other countries in the region."

Malaysia has three million foreign workers and it needs to regulate them and wanted to reduce their number.

"It's not easy to manage them because they are of different nationalities. Some of them are not quite good people, some of them indulge in

>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 1

Mahathir: Wait until next polls

<< PAGE 1 COLUMN 6

crimes and things like that," he said.

Bangladesh and Malaysia have government-to-government arrangement to send workers to Kuala Lumpur, but the process is very slow as only 3,000 people could go in the last one year as per the agreement.

At the convocation, President Abdul Hamid awarded six gold medalists