

Dr M: I'm not anti-Western but will point out their wrongdoings

KUALA LUMPUR Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he is not anti-Western but will continue to speak up about their wrongdoings against other people.

"I am not anti-Western, I'm against the bad things done by the western countries," he said.

He said the Westerners, especially the British, had given the Malays many negative labels like lazy and incompetent, and expected them to like it.

He stressed that therefore, the Western people should also be ready to hear what others think of them.

"The British used to call us lazy Malays, incompetent Malays, untrustworthy Malays. We couldn't say a thing about you, so when I was in a position to say what I think about you, and then said it, you don't like it. When you say it to us, you expect us to like it, we don't like it but we don't have a way for our voice to be heard," he said.

Mahathir said this during an interview in *Hard Talk* aired by BBC in London, yesterday.

He admitted saying that Anglo-Saxon Europeans were proponents of war, slavery and the holocaust.

"Which is true... I am stating a fact. This is their character and I will continue to say so," he said.

On democracy, Mahathir defended the brand of the system being practised in Malaysia.

"It is not necessary that the system will work for everybody, but if they have a bad leader, even a democratic system will fail."

"You must remember that it is a democratic country that dropped the atomic bombs killing more than 200,000 people," he said.

He said if one were to look at the history of the West, they would find that the Westerners normally came up with all kinds of ideologies.

"They used it for some time and then they found it to be defective. They dump it and they start on another. One day they are going to forget about democracy because in some countries, democracy usually ends up with anarchy, and there is practically no government," he said.

Mahathir said democracy was not a system that could fit everybody. "You must have a certain understanding of the limitation of democracy in order for it to work," he said.

He was also asked to comment on the recent election results where the ruling party lost five states to the Opposition allegedly due to the racial division pursued by him during his tenure.

"I know that was a wishful thinking on the part of foreign critics but the fact is that in this election results, it is due to the dissatisfaction on the part of the ruling party's supporters with the present decisions," he said.

He also defended the implementation of the New Economic Policy which was said to be the cause of the loss, saying that it was a necessary step to correct the imbalances that existed since the British days.

On questions regarding Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Mahathir said if Anwar were to become the new prime minister, he was welcomed to conduct a full and thorough inquiry on his (Mahathir's) so-called misdeeds.

Mahathir was also asked whether he regretted what he did to Anwar.

"Why should I regret, he was arrested under the laws of the country, he was tried and sentenced by the court, if he was not wrong, I don't think no matter what you think about the our judiciary, I don't think he would have been sentenced to prison," he said.

On the judicial system in Malaysia, Mahathir vehemently denied he appointed judges in the Supreme Court and stressed that he always had faith in the system.

"I didn't appoint the judges, the judges were recommended by the chief justice, and my duty is to check whether they had any record or not, and after that it was presented to the King who then appoint the judges," he explained.

He also commented the move by Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to apologise and offering monetary compensation to judges removed during his time as "a political move."

"It's a political move, something a man who is very unpopular, now wanting to show that he has to do something right," he said.

Mahathir also accused Abdullah of making use of the system in the worst possible way.

"Nobody can say anything against him, he has newspapers who duly report about him and how great he is, and he was misled by his own supporters into believing that he would win big in the recent elections," he said.

Asked why he choose Abdullah as his predecessor, Mahathir said, "These people, they are very smart in hiding their true character, he was known as Mr Clean and I thought I should appoint a clean person to succeed me... although he was not the one with the highest votes (as vice-president) in the party but I thought that he was older and I appointed him thinking that he is not going to do anything very wrong."

He was also asked why he could not keep quiet after he retired.

"Why should I, they are doing something very bad to my country and I should not let it happen."

"I would be irresponsible if I do that," he added.

— Bernama