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Dr M: Keep power sharing deal

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SIBU: The current system of sharing wealth and power should be maintained for the country to achieve its Vision 2020 objective of becoming a developed nation, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The system, especially power sharing implemented by the country's first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, had proven to be the best solution for a multiracial country like Malaysia, he said.

"We have this concept of different political parties representing different races working together under a coalition.

"It has obviously worked very well, first under the Perikatan, then the Alliance, and now the Barisan Nasional.

"They had and have won elections after elections and formed the governments at both the federal and state levels," he said when addressing about 1,000 people here last night.

Dr Mahathir was here on a one-day visit at the invitation of the Bumiputera Graduates Association.

He said despite being a multiracial and multi-religious country, Malaysia was now a country of great unity, stability and progress because of the system.

"Of course, there is this bit of unhappiness as no one, not any race or



A participant flipping through Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's book *A Doctor In The House*, at a gathering with the former prime minister organised by the Bumiputera Graduates Association in Sibu, Sarawak, yesterday. — NST picture by Nadim Bokhari

any group, can hope or expect to get 100 per cent of what they think is theirs by right.

"But this is the characteristic of a society that is fair and just to ev-

eryone. We are doing the right thing when almost everyone feels a little bit unhappy."

He said the people should continue to realise the need for them to make

some sacrifices to gain from something more worthwhile.

People should not believe in making demands which cannot be met or be in confrontation as this will gen-

erate tensions and fighting, and will mean the end to the great progress we have made."

On wealth-sharing, Dr Mahathir said it had been the policy for all states to share in the country's prosperity.

He said the country's wealth were in its oil and gas resources, oil palm, rubber and pepper industries.

"But our wealth also comes from the many big businesses centred in places like Kuala Lumpur where there are very many rich people. Our system is such that the richer you are, the more you are taxed."

Tun Mahathir said proceeds from such wealth and taxes were re-distributed nationwide by the government so that small states like Perlis could finance its development and progress, instead of being left out.

He said if one was to say that one's wealth was for his state alone, then the wealth of Kuala Lumpur should be spent only within the city.

"But this is not fair as Kuala Lumpur is the place where everyone wants to congregate because of the superior facilities in communications, travel and in doing all kinds of businesses."

Dr Mahathir reiterated that it was because of the fairness in the re-distribution that "development is coming up everywhere in the country". — Bernama