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Newspaper	The Star
Date	12/10/2011

Dr M: We can't please everyone

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia needs to be cautious in trying to please everyone at the expense of its own growth, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

In a statement by the Razak School of Government yesterday, he said Malaysian leaders should avoid being leaders for a specific group of people to avoid being non-leaders to the remaining groups of people.

"Even Western governments take into account their own interests first and foremost in the face of globalisation," said the former prime minister when commenting on the challenges of globalisation.

Dr Mahathir said this when sharing his thoughts on what it means to be a Malaysian leader to 30 leaders from both the private and public sectors in Putrajaya recently.

"Leaders always focus on the needs and development of different groups of people and should continue to do so," he said.

Citing examples of how religion had caused turmoil and conflict in countries like northern Ireland, Iraq and Pakistan, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was stable despite its diversity in race, religion and opinion.

Dr Mahathir said unlike bigger economies, the stability of a small country like Malaysia would have significant impact on its growth.

"Thus, we must engage sensitively in our public discourse. That said, having opposition and counter discourse have been healthy for the country.

"We need to clearly articulate our messages with no ambiguity," he added.

On the public service, Dr Mahathir said that although the country's public service was relatively professional, there was still a need for redundant posts to be removed.

"People should not be promoted to a 'non-post' just for the sake of promotion. It should be done because they are deserving," he said.