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Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad meeting Malaysian students in London yesterday. On the right is his wife, **Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali**. Pic by Zaharah Othman

'Pakatan not fit to run nation'

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ZAHARAH OTHMAN

LONDON: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said a preview of the Pakatan Rakyat government in some states in Malaysia has proven that they are inexperienced to run a country.

Speaking to about 500 Malaysians here, mainly students of the United Kingdom Executive Council, the Malaysian students' body and Malaysians working here, Dr Mahathir said more people complained about their administration compared with the previous state administrations before the opposition came to power.

The former prime minister was answering a question from a student, who wanted to hear his views in the event the opposition won the 13th General Election.

Dr Mahathir and his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, met the Malaysian community here after attending the funeral service of former British prime minister Baroness Margaret Thatcher yesterday.

Dr Mahathir cited the example of

Kelantan, which he said had been given funds for a filtration plant for water supply.

"It has taken five years and the people still cannot drink the water from the taps. It is so murky, you cannot even use it to brush your teeth. So, when a government is inexperienced, this is what is going to happen."

Referring to the opposition's manifesto, he said the promises to collect

less tax, less toll and to give a lot of things free would not work.

"If you say you don't want to collect taxes and have fewer taxes and, at the same time, you say you want to improve the lives of people and want to give them all kinds of things... but if you don't have money, you can't help them.

"They are not going to collect enough revenue to finance even the administration of the country. You have to have a balance. That money (you collect) is going to be used to pay staff and also for the development of the country, for creating scholarships and so on.

"Recently, they said they would

downsize the civil service. We have 1.2 million people working for the government. When they are unemployed, we have to help them. But where do you get the money from?"

He said the opposition pact would not succeed as each party championed different interests.

"If a government is made up of three parties, namely DAP, Pas and Parti Keadilan Rakyat, they will never agree. Each is being pulled in different directions. Pas is pulling it towards an Islamic government while DAP says 'over my dead body'. So, obviously, they cannot agree.

"PKR is very simple. As long as you make Datuk Seri Anwar (Ibrahim) prime minister, they won't argue."

Dr Mahathir said he was disappointed to hear from Malaysian High Commissioner to London Datuk Seri Zakaria Sulong that out of the 70,000 Malaysians living and working in the United Kingdom, only 1,000 had registered for postal voting on April 28 with the Malaysian High Commission.

After the session, Dr Mahathir and his wife were mobbed by the crowd, who wanted to pose for pictures as well as get the former prime minister to autograph copies of his book, *A Doctor in the House*.

