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Dr M: Danger if Anwar or Hadi rule nation

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KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned that just five years of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim or Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang-led opposition rule to govern the country is dangerous for Malaysia.

Referring to his former deputy, Anwar, and Pas president Hadi, he said the opposition was going round promising change.

However, he said many things could be destroyed in five years and this was already evident based on the actions of opposition leaders.

"Already we see this person who claims to fight for free speech suing and resorting to the courts to shut the mouths of his critics.

"Other powers of the government will be similarly abused. Nepotism and cronyism will be employed as indeed they are in the party he now heads," he wrote in his latest CheDet blog posting.

Dr Mahathir said Pakatan Rakyat would also ensure there would be

no return for the Barisan Nasional (BN) if they ever gained power.

"Officers in the government will be used to *gempar* (threaten) whoever tries to change the government. We know this has happened before.

"The record is there. Malaysians must not allow themselves to be hoodwinked as I was hoodwinked by the appearance of religious piety in the past."

The former premier, who ruled the country for 22 years, said BN had listened to the people and changed many laws and policies.

"All that the people need to do is to urge the BN to carry out whatever change they desire.

"But changing the government can and will result in this country becoming unstable and being unable to grow."

Dr Mahathir said the opposition had copied United States President Barack Obama's campaign strategy of promising change in a bid to topple the government.

He said Obama had promised to close down the Guantanamo detention camp, stop trials of detainees by military courts and also vowed to pull out from Iraq and Afghanistan, besides making many other pledges.

However, he said four years into his first term, Obama failed to keep his promises.

"Making promises during campaigns for elections is easy. Keeping them is a different matter. The best hope is that people's memory is short. They will normally forget the promises made."

Dr Mahathir said some people claimed the opposition should be given a chance as BN had ruled the country for 55 years.

The opposition, he said, was also promising to turn Malaysia into a welfare state.

"Everything will be free. No fees for education. No tolls. Large subsidy for petrol. Twenty per cent royalty to oil producing states and many other things."

However, he pointed out that Socialists and Communists had tried the welfare state idea and had failed.

"The reality is that all governments need money in order to develop the country and to subsidise cost of living for the people.

"When the government foregoes taxes, tolls and fees, it will have less money but it will still have to spend money on running and maintaining utilities, expressways, schools, hospitals, operational and development cost, pensions and subsidies."

Dr Mahathir said people should look at BN's track record and compare it with other countries which gained independence at the same time or even with the developed West.

He also reminded people of the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis and how Anwar, who was then the deputy prime minister and minister of finance, tried to manage it.

"His track record was bad although there is a fondness of claiming success brought about by other people as his success.

"Now, as leader of the opposition, he is claiming to bring about change. What good change did he introduce when he was in the government?"



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