



Mahathir and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail at the gathering with Prime Minister's Department employees in Putrajaya yesterday. - **BBXP1X**

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Loyalty to country comes first: PM

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysians should be loyal to the country and not to certain leaders or political parties, says Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

In giving the reminder to members of the administrative machinery at a gathering with employees of the Prime Minister's Department here yesterday, Mahathir said loyalty could be given to certain leaders or political parties if they carried out their duties well for the country.

"If the leaders or parties can raise the achievements of our nation, we should be loyal to them," he said.

Nonetheless, he said, if a leader was found to have strayed from carrying out his responsibilities, there is no need to be loyal to that person.

"Leaders are needed but the country is more important.

"Sometimes, we are forced to change our views slightly ... but do not be too obsessed

with the leader and party to the extent we forget our duties to the country," he said.

"If a country is administered well, the government should receive our loyalty but if there is a deviation, the country is more important, not the certain people or party or ideology," he said.

The prime minister said even though Malaysia did not have a change of government for 61 years since independence, the people chose to change the government in the 14th general election in May last year.

He said a feeling of uneasiness and lack of direction had been created by a certain party as loyalty had been given to a specific group for 61 years.

"But now we need to give our loyalty to the government which comprises those who were enemies of the old government.

"The most important thing is not a change of government but the prosperity and benefits to the country," he said. - Bernama