

**Not All Demands Of The Various Races Can Be Met - Mahathir
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 17 (Bernama) -- Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the various races in the country must accept the fact that all their claims cannot be fulfilled by the government.

He said that if all the races could accept this fact, then this country would continue to remain peaceful, thus enabling a rapid economic development.

He said if any ethnic race wanted its demand to be fulfilled then it would indirectly deny the other races their rights, thus creating unhealthy competition between them.

"I feel administering a multi-racial country is different from that of a homogeneous country because there will certainly be demands made by the various races.

"In order to ensure peace in Malaysia, each race must accept the fact that not all 100 per cent of their demands can be entertained. If they insist on getting all their demands met, then this will deny the other races of their rights," he said in the programme "Bicara Negarawan bersama Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad" which was aired by RTM1 Friday night.

He said this when responding to a question on the openness introduced by the government after the 2004 general election which resulted in several groups openly demanding equal rights.

The three-member panel in the programme comprised Bernama editor-in-chief Datuk Yong Soo Heong, Utusan Group assistant chief editor I Datuk Zaini Hassan and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak lecturer Dr Jeniri Amir.

According to Dr Mahathir, Malaysia was one of the nations that had granted freedom to all races in the country to use their own languages besides the national language in schools.

He said the freedom was given in order to respect the wishes of certain groups to continue using their own language in schools.

Meanwhile, the former prime minister said issues concerning claims of equality could be corrected by giving deep understanding to the various races in the country on the principles that had been practiced since the formation of Malaysia.

"When living in a multi-racial country, we have to accept the fact that we cannot obtain everything that we considered as our right.

When asked on the Barisan Nasional component parties that were currently less active, Dr Mahathir said they should get down on the ground and try to get closer to the grassroots by resolving the problems faced by the people.

In addition he said, the people must also realise that after fifty years of independence the cooperative spirit of component parties had created the best environment enjoyed by the people currently.

"We must remember that the coalition government had cooperated for fifty years and that this government had brought success to Malaysia, more so than the other governments.

"Thus we shouldn't reject the system that had brought success to us compared to one that is unfamiliar to us," he said.

Dr Mahathir also touched on winnable candidates in the general election which would create problems between the leaderships and the grassroots.

He said the winnable candidates in the election, which will depend on the evaluation and opinion of the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and his advisors, may go against the wishes of the party and create problems of sabotaging candidates in the election.

When asked on the appropriate time for the election, Dr Mahathir said: "Later will be alright. This will give time to Najib to make an assessment on who should be the candidates."

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