

Dr M laments wealth-grabbing, power abusing politicians

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The current political scenario no longer focuses on the actual task of a politician but on the grabbing of wealth, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (pic).

The former prime minister said that to be in a political party was not to enrich oneself but to shoulder the responsibility of developing the country.

"When we are all poor, we are united because we need to defend ourselves. Now, our country is quite rich from the previous time and no longer concentrates on the actual task of a politician and political party.

"We are in a political party not to enrich ourselves but to develop the country, and from that development, we will get our share and others will get theirs.

"If we use political power for ourselves, that is wrong. This is not actually the purpose, politics is about the country's administration to develop the country but some attain power, abuse that power for their own gains. That is causing the problem at present," he said when interviewed through the 'Dalam Radar Khas' programme aired by Bernama Radio24last night.

Replying to a listener that he (Dr Mahathir) should not have resigned as prime minister before the country attained Vision 2020, he said, when he was still serving as prime minister, many were of the view that it was best the 'old man' retire and give the opportunity to someone younger.

"The voices got louder, even though not too clear to everyone. I realised that anyone who sits too long in one position will be hated by others, even with achievements.

"Some were of the opinion that if there was a change in leadership, the country will become more developed and that was why, during the 2004 General Election, we received much better support from the people," he said.

He said it was the people's hope that the new leadership would bring about better changes but it was seen that the policies being implemented were not too good with the performance worsening, and the people losing confidence in the government.

"And in 2008 (general election) the people's support was reduced. When I was prime minister, it was impossible that I knew it would happen, I thought the leadership change must bring changes (for the better) but I could not guess correctly if it was going towards progress or regress," he said.

On the culture of using the new media to criticise the government, Dr Mahathir said he had set up his own blog because he was ostracised, with restrictions imposed on him.

"I did not understand why, because I had voluntarily given up my power to someone else. At that time, I found out that blogs were difficult to restrict and because of that, I use the new media to voice my opinion," he said.

On the impact of the cancellation of mega projects such as the crooked bridge in Johor, Dr Mahathir said the action had diminished the people's confidence on the government's ability.

A government which failed to implement a plan that was considered beneficial to the people was viewed by them as a weak government that did not fulfil its promises, he added.

"This dents the government's image if we do not deliver our promises with the excuse that we supposedly do not have money and so forth, that are not being supported by facts.

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