

## India too democratic, says former Malaysian PM

Former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad has singled out India as an Asian country that has 'made the mistake of being too democratic' and compared it unfavourably with China's authoritarian regime.

Mahathir said: 'India, of course, will grow, but more slowly than China. It has the numbers but is not making use of them well.'

He identified China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and, 'to a lesser extent', India as the countries which would lead the Asian charge, New Straits Times said Tuesday.

Mahathir, who ruled Malaysia for over two decades, told a seminar on Asia and 21st century that people 'do not understand the limits of democracy'.

'Democracy can be a hindrance to progress because you spend so much time politicking that you don't have time to develop your country.'

'In China, there's not much politics. So, they can spend more time developing their country.'

He blamed the West for making democracy and freedom the cornerstone of progress.

It is the West's focus on democracy, civil rights and individual liberties - attributes flaunted by Western governments - that Mahathir identified as being the reason behind 'its economic flaccidity'.

'The British believe a lot in so-called freedom. Their workers must be allowed to go on strike all the time. So, they have the problem of being a very unproductive population.'

'They must be free of everything. When you do that, productivity will drop. When productivity drops, you cannot compete.'

Talking about Asia, Mahathir ruled out a role for 'strife-torn' West Asia.

'They are not going to make much progress, unfortunately. They are not going to contribute to the Asia of the 21st century. But it doesn't matter because Asia is such a big place,' Mahathir said.

East Asia's emerging economic dominance over the West is due to its productivity and strong work ethic, he said.

However, the former premier warned of the increasing trend among young Asians to ape Western culture.

'Today, there are places in Tokyo where you see young people with multi-coloured hair. They look like Red Indians. These are the young Japanese who have adopted Western values,' said the octogenarian who continues to draw crowds six years after he quit office.

'They want to be free and be able to change the place they work, hop from one place to another and take marijuana. This is what the Europeans do. This is progress for those young people.'

( © IANS / India eNews)