

MAHATHIR-BN
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KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 23 (BERNAMA)--(DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD HAS REMINDED BARISAN NASIONAL COMPONENT PARTIES OF THE NEED TO AVOID DIFFERENCES AT THE LEADERSHIP LEVEL SO THAT ANY WEAKNESS THAT THEY MIGHT FACE COULD BE OVERCOME.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID TODAY THAT UNDERSTANDING AND SOLIDARITY WERE +AN ASSET AND AN INVESTMENT+ TO THE COUNTRY, AND BARISAN NASIONAL MEMBERS MUST BE AWARE OF THE COALITION'S HIGH STANDING AS A REALITY OF MALAYSIAN POLITICS.

+WE CANNOT ALLOW DIFFERENCES TO DISRUPT THE COOPERATION AMONG COMPONENT PARTIES AND THEIR MEMBERS,+ HE ADDED WHEN OPENING THE GERAKAN DELEGATES' CONFERENCE AT DEWAN TUANKU ABDUL RAHMAN HERE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS CHAIRMAN OF BARISAN NASIONAL, SAID ADJUSTMENTS WERE NECESSARY FROM TIME TO TIME TO STRENGTHEN UNDERSTANDING AND SOLIDARITY.

SUCH UNDERSTANDING AND SOLIDARITY WERE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT AT THE LEADERSHIP LEVEL, HE SAID.--MORE 1320/PA
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IF CONCERN ABOUT THE FUTURE AND THE PUBLIC INTERESTS WERE +OUR CONSTANT BASIS AND MEASURE+ FOR ACTION, ALL MALAYSIANS WOULD BENEFIT +MANIFOLD,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT CONTRIBUTIONS BY MEMBERS TO ENHANCE BARISAN'S HIGH STANDING WERE +AN INVALUABLE+ INVESTMENT TO THE NATION'S FUTURE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR'S REMARKS ARE SEEN BY POLITICAL CIRCLES AS PERTINENT INVIEW OF THE STRIFE IN SEVERAL BARISAN COMPONENT PARTIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE SARAWAK NATIONAL PARTY (SNAP), WHICH IS BADLY AFFECTED BY THE DEFECTION OF THREE MP'S AND NINE STATE ASSEMBLYMEN.

THEY ARE UNDERSTOOD TO BE ALSO DIRECTED AT THE MIC, WHOSE PRESIDENT DATUK S. SAMY VELLU IS INVOLVED IN A COURT BATTLE AGAINST HIS FORMER PROTEGE ENCIK V. GOVINDARAJ, AND THE GERAKAN AND MCA WHICH HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN PUBLIC BICKERING. --MORE 1527/MD
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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE INFLUENCE WIELDED BY SOME PEOPLE WHO HE SAID ADOPTED EXTREME POSITIONS AND EXPLOITED COMMUNAL AND OTHER SENSITIVE ISSUES TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL ENDS.

HE SAID THAT SUCH POLITICAL TACTICS, OFTEN USED DURING ELECTIONS, COULD CAUSE ANXIETY AMONG PEOPLE WHO DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE REAL SITUATION AND THE ISSUES INVOLVED.

HE SAID THAT THE OPPOSITION HAD USED COMMUNAL ISSUES IN THE LAST TWO BY-ELECTIONS TO SUCCESSFULLY INFLAME THE PEOPLE.

+WHAT HAPPENED AT KEPAYANG AND RAUB (WHERE THE BY-ELECTIONS WERE HELD) SHOULD BE A LESSON TO US IN THE BARISAN TO STRENGTHEN UNDERSTANDING AND SOLIDARITY AND TOLERANCE WITHIN THE COALITION AND TO CONVINCE THE PEOPLE THAT EXTREMISM HAS NO PLACE IN THE COUNTRY'S POLITICS,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SPOKE ON THE LOOK EAST POLICY, THE MALAYSIA INCORPORATED CONCEPT, THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY AND THE ISLAMIC BANK, AND SAID HE REGRETTED THAT THERE WERE STILL LEADERS WHO DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THESE. -- MORE 1419/MK

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HE SAID THE LEADERS SHOULD TRY TO UNDERSTAND IN DETAIL ALL THESE AND OTHER CURRENT ISSUES BY READING AND RE-READING THE RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS.

ON ISLAM, HE SAID UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELIGION BY NON-MUSLIMS WAS ESSENTIAL FOR THEM TO UNDERSTAND BETTER THE POLITICAL, SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC REALITIES OF THE NATION.

UNDERSTANDING THE RELIGION OF OTHERS DID NOT MEAN EMBRACING THAT FAITH. IN ISLAM, THERE IS NO COMPULSION, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID ISLAM URGED ITS FOLLOWERS TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH OTHERS WHILE ADHERING TO ITS TEACHINGS.

+IN SUCH A SITUATION, PEACE, PROSPERITY AND STABILITY ARE ASSURED FOR ALL BECAUSE ISLAM IS CLEARLY NOT AN OFFENSIVE RELIGION AND IS IN FACT DEFENSIVE,+ HE SAID. -- BERNAMA 1434/MK