

PM WARNS BN MEMBERS AGAINST TACTIC

STAR 17 OCT 1983

PRIME MINISTER Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned Barisan Nasional members that the tactic of seeking popularity by raising sensitive issues could "backfire and bring negative effects."

"I am aware of the role of sensitive issues in efforts to seek popularity. But in Malaysia, we cannot speak to one community only without being heard by the other communities," he said when opening the 31st MCA general assembly.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, stressed that unity and harmony was vital in a multi-racial country like Malaysia.

He said that while the people had plenty of freedom, this freedom should not be misused by anyone for purposes clearly opposed to national interest.

He added that in a multi-racial country like Malaysia, there were many sensitive issues which, if not handled with diplomacy, would create chaos.

"In the Barisan we have specific ways and forums to discuss sensitive problems. Similarly, the Government has channels and forums to discuss

such problems.

"Through these channels and forums, discussions devoid of emotions can be held and all uncertainties, misinterpretations or policy mistakes can be overcome.

"With this, the people won't become agitated, political stability would not be shattered and businessmen, industrialists and investors would not feel threatened," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir urged MCA members to look at issues in the proper perspective and not to allow sentiments to rule them.

He also touched on opposition by certain quarters to the various developments in the country lately, such as the Look East policy, the Malaysia Incorporated and "privatisation" concepts, the adoption of Islamic and other good values among the people, the Leadership by Example campaign and the cleanliness campaign.

He said that these developments were aimed at creating a Malaysian identity that reflected the resilience and capability of the nation.

"But, as I have said, good things are not easily accepted by the people while there will always be those who

oppose them. It is a pity that among those who oppose are those who are highly qualified and widely experienced," he said.

"It is a shame that they allow negativism to prevent them from seeing and assessing the benefits of the changes."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said that the changes, if studied carefully and with an open mind, had more benefits than defects.

"If examined positively, among these defects are many that can be overcome and changed into benefits," he said.

Using ghosts as an analogy, he said: "If we constantly discuss and dream about ghosts not only will we become afraid and weak in spirit, it is not impossible that we will see the ghosts of our dreams everywhere.

"People in such a condition will not be able to do anything except live with the ghosts of their own creation," he said.

If one did not believe in figments of one's own imagination, one would not be afraid of such ghosts but would fear the threats that really existed, he added.