

# Dangerous trend among parties

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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today warned Barisan Nasional component parties against forsaking political interests in their pursuit for material gain.

He expressed his worry over the dangerous trend among some political parties including Umno which are becoming "commercialised."

"These parties tend to forget their political obligations by becoming too engrossed in economic activities.

"If this trend continues, these parties would find themselves losing their influence and be out of place in the political arena," he added.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the foundation laying ceremony of the Kedah MIC building here.

He noted that not only Umno was selling up buildings throughout the country but also other component parties in the Barisan Nasional including MIC, MCA and even Gerakan.

"I fear that if these parties became too engrossed in building properties, they would forget their political obligations and responsi-

bilities.

"It is highly profitable to own building but we must first remember that we are political parties and our main function is to indulge in political activities.

"We must be conscious and lend to the needs and the welfare of the people as best we can.

"We should not be too absorbed with economic activities, buildings, companies, licences and status lest we forget that we have responsibilities to carry out for our voters," he added.

## Threat

The Prime Minister said that if component parties in the Barisan Nasional forsake their functions as political parties and commercialised themselves in pursuit of material gains, they would lose their influence and eventually be defeated in the political arena.

"While we could be proud to lay foundations of our buildings, we should not lose our sense of direction and obligations.

"Economic activities are secondary to political parties and could be disregarded if they came in between our political

duties," he said.

On the threat by Pas, Dr Mahathir said the Barisan Nasional component parties were aware of the real intention behind their campaigns.

"They knew religion was its only gimmick to weaken Umno and the solidarity of the Malays and the component parties in the Barisan.

"They knew that Pas was out to fish in troubled waters," he said.

He said Umno and the other members in the Barisan Nasional had shown that they were not crazy for power when Opposition parties including Pas were invited to form a coalition.

"Its leaders tried to force Umno into making statements that would create resentment among the component parties so as to erode their confidence in Umno and eventually leave Umno.

"But these parties were not easily waylaid by Pas, and Barisan Nasional had grown from strength to strength.

"The stability of Barisan Nasional is evident now and I hope this will prevail," he said.

Dr Mahathir is on a two-day visit of his constituency, Kubang Pasu.