

SINK DIFFERENCES, PM TELLS MCA FACTIONS

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ALOR STAR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told MCA members today to sink their differences and unite for the betterment of the party and Barisan Nasional.

The Prime Minister said: "It does not matter who wins and who loses in the elections. What is important is that the party members are united."

"If the MCA is split, then the party has lost. It does not matter who leads the party but what is important is that the members are united for a common goal," he added.

He told some 150 Barisan members in Jitra near here that the MCA must be united and strong irrespective of its president to boost the unity and strength of the Barisan.

"The unsolved MCA problem is serious for the Barisan, especially when the MCA is the second largest component party."

"I do not want to make an indepth comment on the present crisis because this is a very sensitive issue. I would rather touch on the subject generally and members must bear in mind that forming camps and factions will only see the downfall of the component party," he added.

Dr Mahathir also hit out at certain quarters who were instigating the races against one another.

"They have been capitalising on the MCA crisis in order to cause chaos and disunity among the members and are all out to cause enmity among the respective races."

"They have even spread rumours that the Government had introduced integrated schools in order to take away the rights of the Chinese community," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had no intention of abolishing the language and culture of the non-Malays.

The various communities had the right to learn their mother tongue and open schools where the medium of instruction was not Malay, he said.

These quarters, he said, were dissatisfied with the peace and unity enjoyed by the people and were trying their best to split the people for personal gains.

Dr Mahathir added that the Government had always been fair to all races in the country and "all of us have enjoyed the benefits and development extended to the people since independence."

"I agree that not all of us were given the necessities desired but we cannot deny that the Government has never been partial or bias in distributing development and modernisation to the people."

He added that the non-Malays should now support the Government and not turn against the Government by threatening to vote for opposition parties unless their wants were fulfilled, especially when the Government was facing a serious economic setback.

The Prime Minister also hit out at PAS for changing its tactics to woo the non-Malays, especially the Chinese, by promising to abolish the special privileges given to the Malays by the Government if it came to power.

"PAS is resorting to its latest strategy to accept all the other races now because the opposition party is aware that BN had always won a general election owing to the close co-operation of all members in the coalition."

He criticised PAS for using Islam as a tool to woo support for political gains and warned that "if PAS comes to power, all the races in the country will suffer."