

Dr M: I want MCA to remain intact

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JITRA, Thurs.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants MCA to remain intact and not to break up in the face of the present crisis.

"To me, whoever wins the party elections is not important. What is more vital is for the MCA to win," he said.

"Winning is for the party to remain intact and for the members consolidating their resources and remaining united.

"If MCA splits, the Barisan Nasional will be weakened. The MCA is a major component party of the coalition and is important for a Barisan victory in the elections.

"MCA members should not be too emotional and eager in taking sides because this could only hurt the party in the long run."

The Prime Minister was addressing Kubang

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Pasu Barisan Nasional leaders here this afternoon.

He said he would rather not dwell too much on the MCA crisis because it was an extremely sensitive issue.

"If I deliberate on the matter, certain quarters would make the wrong interpretations, and this would only worsen the situation.

"All I would like to say is that I want the party to remain intact," he said.

(Earlier in Kuala Lumpur, Dr Mahathir indicated to reporters after opening the Eighth Malaysian Law Conference that no decision will be taken on the MCA's position in the Barisan Nasional until after the MCA general assembly on Nov 24.

(The party had asked for and was given a three-month grace period on August 17 at a Barisan Supreme Council meeting to settle the party crisis by Nov 17 or leave the Barisan.)

"(They (the MCA) will have their meeting ... what is a few days more," he said in reply to questions by newsmen on the Nov 17 deadline.

(It was reported that Datuk Mak would "report" his failure to resolve the MCA crisis to the Barisan Nasional after Nov 17.)

Dr Mahathir also said that the Government had

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remained in power because of its ability to cooperate and compromise with the other ethnic groups in the country.

"There are places for everybody — the Chinese, the Indians, the Kadazans, Muruts and other groups," he said.

"We have been considerate to all. We may not be able to entertain all the demands but we still give although (what is given) is limited.

"Pas, which once would not have anything to do with non-Muslims, now envy this co-operation Umno has with the others. They, too, are now trying to woo the non-Malays.

"They have tried to use all sorts of tactics. They are willing to forsake their own race and religion just to pursue their political interests.

Demands

"They will even sell their own God just to acquire political power in the country.

"Pas leaders are a greedy lot. We are aware of their true character. We had befriended them once," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Pas leaders have forked tongues.

"What they propagate before the Chinese will not be the same with what they will be telling the Malays."

He also advised certain quarters not to exploit the situation by making demands to Umno.

"I am aware of certain people who are threatening to support Pas should Umno fail to satisfy their demands.

"If Pas wins, which is impossible, the country will be chaotic. They could use the power to do anything, including suppression of the people," he said.