

PM: Let's work together for our common future

Co-existence the only way

By **BALAN MOSES**

NST 17 SEP 1986

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Malaysians should re-dedicate themselves to the concept of multi-racialism and a common destiny built on co-existence between the races, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the people should realise that extremism in any form has no place in Malaysian society.

Malaysians, he said, should value the understanding forged between the founding fathers of the nation which hinged on co-operation among the races.

In this respect, the various races should not question the philosophy behind the nation's formation. This is because the philosophy had been debated and agreed to by those who fought for independence.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Barisan

Nasional chairman, said the coalition believed that appreciation of the nation's history gave greater meaning to its struggle.

"We should also try to discuss issues on which we can come to some form of agreement," he told a crowd of about 2,500 youths at a Malaysia Day celebration organised by Barisan Nasional Youth at the Putra World Trade Centre.

"We must ask ourselves what being a Malaysian means. It means we cannot ignore the multi-racial character of the nation and that we should find ways to co-operate.

BN philosophy

"Such co-operation is possible because the majority of us are politically matured and understand what is necessary for the creation of a united nation."

The Barisan Nasional, he said, was a good example of co-operation between the various races. "Although we have parties based on race such as Umno, MIC and MCA as components, we generally realise the need for co-operation."

This solidarity was reflected in the results of the recent general election where the Barisan emerged a clear winner. The coalition's overwhelming victory indicated a rejection of narrow communal interests by the majority of Malaysians.

Dr Mahathir, however, admitted that religious extremists and racial chauvinists had obtained the support of some people.

Elaborating on the Barisan Nasional philosophy, he said: "Although we admit we cannot see eye to eye on some issues and hold opposing views on some matters, we have accepted the fact that confrontation is not the way to solve problems.

"Instead we have found that it is better for all parties to sit down and talk and find solutions acceptable to all in an amicable manner."

The Prime Minister was thankful that the majority of Malaysians held moderate views on most matters.

He said Malaysians should realise that they could not make extreme demands.

"If we make such demands, we must accept the fact that they cannot be met.

Demands by the races or the various States should be moderate so that they have a better chance of being met."

Dr Mahathir also called on Malaysians to nurture a sense of love for their country "as the country is worthy of such love."

In this respect, he criticised some quarters who described nationalism as anti-Islamic. "If we do not love our country, who else will do so? If we do not defend our country, who else will do so?"

On the Barisan Nasional Youth, he said it had yet to be formalised. He felt that the movement could play an important role in perpetuating the Barisan Nasional philosophy.

The movement, he added, should concentrate on national issues aimed at strengthening unity among the people.

The Prime Minister took to task those who spread rumours to create unrest among the people. The people, he said, should ignore these mischief-makers and carry on with the task of building a strong and resilient society.