

PM: We can serve better with a strong majority

BN NEEDS

A BIG WIN

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the Barisan Nasional needed a strong majority in order to serve the people.

"If the Barisan Nasional had a small majority, it would be so busy trying to ensure that its MPs did not switch camps that it would not have the time to serve the people," he added.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, warned party members that "emotional" politics would only affect the performance of the Barisan Nasional.

Dr Mahathir said it was not important who should stand for

election.

"What is more important is that members should give their full support to all Barisan candidates," he said at the opening of the Kepong Umno delegates meeting at the Putra World Centre here.

He said that in politics, it was more important to form the Government than to ensure the victory of a single candidate.

He said members should place national interests above self-interests and urged them to preserve the spirit of Umno's struggle in the 1950s.

"Through unity, the Malays who at one time lived in isolation in little States succeeded in opposing the British colonialists'

plan to form the Malayan Union," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there was no wealth, education or arms among the Malays at that time but through unity, "we became a strong race and were able to challenge the authority of a big world power."

He called on all sections of the society to recall how humiliating life was under colonial rule because the people, especially the Malays, had no standing at all.

"If there were job opportunities in offices, we were only good for the post of office boys, even if our age might be 50," Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir said that although Umno succeeded in fighting the

British and thwarting their schemes, it made a rational decision in wanting to forge inter-communal co-operation in the country.

He told the delegates that although Umno was a Malay party, it also looked after the interests of other races.

"History had shown that the party was not greedy for power but was willing to share it with others."

Citing the Batu Berendam parliamentary seat in Malacca as an example, Dr Mahathir said MCA candidates had been contesting the seat since Independence although the majority of voters were Malays.

This arrangement, he said, showed the party's broadmindedness to ensure a victory for the then Alliance and later the Barisan Nasional.

He urged members to work wholeheartedly for the party and not to "threaten" it in any way.

Dr Mahathir, who was earlier given a standing ovation by the delegates, said he was touched by the reception he received on his nation-wide tour.

But he reminded members that the party was more important than the president. "I am not important. What is important is the party. When I go, there will still be Umno," he said.

Earlier, Kepong Umno divisional chief Abbas Osman pledged the division's support for any Barisan candidate contesting the Kepong seat.