

# PM: Priority to overall co-operation in coalition

# Avoid mini pacts in BN

WST 3 JUL 1989

By Ho Kay Tat

**KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties should enhance the existing structure of co-operation rather than create another level of arrangement among themselves, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.**

The Prime Minister said the present system was the best way to solve problems which arose in administering the country.

The system of overall co-operation among BN component parties had existed for a long time and had been beneficial to the coalition, he said.

The BN chairman said this when opening the 36th MCA an-

nual general assembly at the Wisma MCA.

Dr Mahathir said this did not mean that the BN would stop component parties which wanted to co-operate among themselves.

"It is possible that such co-operation will benefit the Barisan Nasional as a whole."

## Consensus

However, the Prime Minister noted that there were a few BN leaders who felt uneasy over the move of two or three parties to start another "level of co-operation".

"What we hope is that if such moves arouse the suspicion of other BN parties, those involved should try to avoid it. Instead they should give priority to enhancing co-operation at the coalition level," he said.

Dr Mahathir, however, said this was his personal opinion

and not necessarily the view of all BN leaders.

The Gerakan and Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) have been talking about forming a confederation between themselves and other multi-racial parties within the BN. This had created uneasiness among the other parties, which felt that it would lead to a coalition-within-a-coalition.

The Prime Minister said all BN leaders must fully understand the concept of consensus and co-operation practised by the coalition.

He acknowledged that sometimes there were obstacles in achieving consensus.

But these obstacles could be overcome through co-operation, sincerity and by giving priority to national interests and the interests of the majority.

"Whatever problems which may arise are only temporary

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## Dr M praises Bahasa speech

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and in the end we will be able to solve them in a way which will not adversely affect the nation nor divide the races."

Dr Mahathir also said he was satisfied with the performances of the BN in by-elections held so far.

He said BN need not win every by-election, as what was important was to win most of them.

Dr Mahathir said the results of these by-elections proved:

● that the BN has the strong support of the people;

● the concept of consensus within BN was working well; and

● democracy was still alive.

Dr Mahathir said the unity and level of co-operation between the parties during the by-elections was something to be proud of.

He said that there were critics who alleged that there was no democracy in the country, but the fact that by-elections were held,

and some were won by the Opposition, proved otherwise.

Dr Mahathir said these critics were good at misleading the people, but he was confident that the "silent majority" among the people was convinced that democracy would continue to exist.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir said he was happy to note that MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik paid attention to the interests of the other races and not just the Chinese in his speech.

"This is an important attitude to have among BN leaders," he said.

He also praised the MCA delegates for understanding Dr Ling's speech which was read in Bahasa Malaysia.

"Your understanding of the language was evident in the applause at certain points of the speech," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he hoped the MCA would continue to strengthen itself but added that this must be for the good of BN unity.