

PM to Barisan parties: Work for victory

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DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged Barisan Nasional parties to ensure that their members and supporters vote for the coalition's candidates in the general election.

The Prime Minister said there were instances in the past when some of the supporters refused to vote for a Barisan candidate because he was not from their party.

"My present nationwide tour with other Barisan leaders is also to inform state and divisional leaders that they must fully support the candidates nominated by the coalition," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Barisan candidates represented the coalition, not the component parties.

"They should not be regarded as MCA, Gerakan or MIC candidates ... as Barisan members, we must support our own candidates," he told newsmen after opening the MCA general assembly at the party headquarters in Kuala Lumpur.

However, the Barisan chairman was sure that the component parties would reach a consensus for the coming general election to ensure close co-operation.

"God willing (through close co-operation), the

Barisan will achieve an excellent victory," Dr Mahathir said.

He also said the Umno election machinery was ready to face the elections.

Asked if the elections would be held in September as widely speculated, Dr Mahathir quipped: "September 1991 would be suitable."

Earlier, he said in his speech that there were times when differences arose among component parties although all adhered to the Barisan concept.

Dr Mahathir said that at times, supporters of a particular party would not support a candidate from another component party, and would even sponsor independents to try to defeat them.

"Such practices are dangerous because if we do this to one component party, it may (retaliate and) do the same in another constituency," he added.

Dr Mahathir advised component parties to resolve all internal problems, especially with the elections at hand.

He said they should not regard any internal problem as small because it could affect the effectiveness of the Barisan.

At the same time, Dr Mahathir said, the component parties should also get closer together to maintain co-operation and reduce misunderstanding.

He urged the Barisan leaders to streamline their parties, saying the Barisan derived its strength from its components.

Dr Mahathir also praised MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and his deputy Datuk Lee Kim Sai for agreeing not to have a contest for the top post.

He believed the majority of MCA members welcomed the decision.

"We must always place the strength of the party above the position of any personality," he said.

"I hope the spirit shown (by the MCA) will be followed by the other Barisan parties," he said.

Dr Mahathir hoped that MCA members would give their support to the winners in the elections to maintain party unity.

Dr Mahathir also said the opposition parties were now forming a coalition because they saw how successful the Barisan concept was.

However, he said, the "imitation coalition" would not work because it was not like the Barisan

which comprised moderate parties.

He said PAS was an extremist party which considered non-Muslims infidels while the DAP would not accept the position of the Malays and other bumiputras.

Dr Mahathir said the DAP and PAS were working together despite their differences because they wanted to win the elections.

"Their aim is to mislead the voters because there is no possibility of them continuing their co-operation after the elections," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was the responsibility of Barisan members to expose the ploy of the opposition because the PAS-DAP-Semangat 46 pact could only bring instability to the country.

He said the Barisan must remain in power to continue to ensure peace and intensive economic growth.

Dr Mahathir said the growth rate for the first three months this year was 10.4 per cent.

Job opportunities were increasing with factories advertising job vacancies every day, he said.