

# MAINTAIN PACT FOR STABILITY, MCA TOLD

KUALALUMPUR Sun — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Umno-MCA and Barisan Nasional strategy of co-operation was better for stability, peace and economic development than the chauvinistic style practised by the DAP or PAS in championing the future of both the Chinese and the Malay communities.

The Prime Minister urged the MCA to maintain its high level of co-operation with Umno and other Barisan component parties to ensure political stability and encourage economic growth in the country.

He advised the MCA against what he called DAP's communal style of politics, which had been adopted to show that the party championed the cause of the Chinese community.

He said there had been times in the past when the MCA had felt threatened by the DAP, with the result that some MCA members tried to be more chauvinistic than the DAP.

"They feel that by showing that they give greater attention to the Chinese community than the DAP, they can defeat the DAP," he said at the opening of the MCA general assembly.

The Prime Minister said that such a stand was not in line with the Barisan Nasional, adding that it had in the past almost destroyed the Umno-MCA pact that formed the pillar of the coalition.

"But the MCA leadership has succeeded in containing the DAP style of sentiments and approach," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the DAP felt threatened by the co-operation between the Malays and the Chinese through the Umno-MCA pact.

He said that although the DAP had at times won more seats, the party had not been successful in leading any state govern-

ment. What could the DAP offer the Chinese community that the MCA could not when the DAP co-operated with Semangat 46 and PAS, he asked.

"The only thing the Chinese community can get if the DAP wins is DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang as the Chief Minister of Penang and not Dr Koh Tsu Koon (the present Chief Minister from Gerakan)," he said.

The Prime Minister and the Menteri Besar would still be Malays from Semangat 46 or PAS.

"There is nothing the DAP can do for the Chinese community which cannot be achieved by the MCA and Gerakan," he added.

The MCA, he added, should not be afraid of being accused of neglecting the Chinese cause because Malay-Chinese and Umno-MCA co-operation benefitted the Chinese community.

The Chinese communi-

ty would not benefit if they faced tension with the bumiputras, he said.

Dr Mahathir also said the support of Malay voters was still politically vital for non-Malay parties in the Barisan despite some Malays going for DAP-PAS co-operation.

"If the Malays assume that the MCA is too chauvinistic, it will be difficult for MCA candidates to get their votes," he said.

He added, however, that there was evidence that PAS supporters had voted for the DAP in the last general election.

Dr Mahathir also said that the DAP had made an "180-degree about-turn" in its willingness not only to co-operate and accept the administration of Semangat 46 if they formed the government, but also to work with PAS.

The DAP, he said, did not dare reject the National Development Policy (NDP) because this would be opposed by Semangat 46 and PAS.

"The NDP, in principle, cannot be turned into a political issue to attack the MCA. What was done by the DAP can be described as nit-picking, a characteristic of the DAP," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was meaningless for the people to jostle for the nation's wealth without co-operating to enhance economic growth.

He said rapid economic growth was necessary for

the people to continue enjoying the nation's prosperity as the population was fast increasing.

The rate of economic growth should be higher than the rate of population growth if poverty was to be prevented, he said.

According to the Prime Minister, the country's population has increased from seven million at the time of independence in 1957 to the present 18.6 million.

He said that if the people had been overzealous in grabbing wealth in the past — when there had been no economic growth — the country would be in a sorry state now.

"According to the Government's estimate, the population of Malaysia in 2050 will reach 70 million and this means that we have to strive harder to improve the nation's wealth so that the standard of living will not decline due to the increase in the population," he said.

On political stability, Dr Mahathir said that when he met the US Secretary of State here last week, Mr James Baker had asked how Malaysia, with its multi-ethnicity, had managed to prevent racial strife.

"My answer was simple and short. I told him 'Barisan Nasional'," he said, adding that many countries wanted to know Malaysia's secret.

He said Malaysia's political stability had given the nation the world's highest economic growth, a fact that was acknowledged globally.

The Barisan, he said, believed in resolving issues through consultations and not through demonstrations or public debate.

He said that as the MCA would eventually have more and more young members, they should understand the history, origin, tradition and system decided by the party founders.

"If they are not well-versed with these, they may cast aside these basics which have made Malaysia stable and peaceful," he added.

Referring to ties between the MCA and Gerakan, which were cold at times, Dr Mahathir advised leaders of both parties to attend each other's general assemblies.

Leaders of Barisan component parties present at the opening ceremony included Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, its secretary-general Datuk Chan Choong Tak, Penang Chief Minister Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Penang Gerakan chief Datuk Tan Gim Hwa, Umno secretary-general Datuk Hlohamed Rahmat, MIC deputy president Datuk S Subramaniam and PBDS president Datuk Leo Moggie.