

Play your role, PM tells parties

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By Jeffrey Ramayah

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Political parties must continue to play a major role in encouraging the people to seize job and business opportunities and to strive to better themselves, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said that by doing so the Barisan Nasional government could achieve its objective of eradicating poverty among all communities.

"All the different communities in the country are free to seize job and business opportunities made available by the government to better their lot," he said when declaring open the 39th MIC general assembly at the Tenaga Nasional Berhad multipurpose hall in Jalan Pantai.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was one of the world's democratic countries which paid serious attention to

providing social justice for its people of various races.

Through the practice of fairness to its various communities, Malaysia had succeeded not only in uniting the people but also in achieving political stability which was needed to pursue rapid and stable economic growth.

Dr Mahathir said in upholding social justice, no race would feel alienated or obstructed from attaining success.

Malaysians were fortunate because the country's economic growth rate had been steady and encouraging over the past years although the world economy had generally been sluggish.

He said Malaysia's economic growth was the most rapid in the region and this was the reason why the recent budget generally benefited the people, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government admitted that pov-

erty still existed in the country.

"This situation is unusual because job opportunities are vast and the government is forced to recruit foreigners to overcome the labour shortage," he said.

The government would continue to provide more job and business opportunities so that the people could acquire wealth.

Dr Mahathir said although the Government would continue to provide all forms of assistance to the people, no community should adopt a "dependent syndrome" culture because this would only weaken that particular community.

He said he was glad to note that there was unity and stability in the MIC as this would mean that the community could benefit more from government programmes.

"The future of the Indian community is guaranteed under Barisan rule."

Dr Mahathir said as a multiracial country, there was no room for extremism by any party out to seek popularity within that community.

He said the Barisan Nasional considered the MIC as an equal partner and in all development programmes the interest of the Indian community was taken into consideration.

"Although the Indian community is small compared with the Malays, their voice is heard loud and clear," he said.

The Barisan Nasional would ensure that all communities in the country were treated fairly.

Dr Mahathir said the MIC had played a key role in looking after the interests of the Indians.

He advised MIC members not to be influenced by opposition parties which claimed that they could look after the interests of the Indians better than the MIC.