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COOPERATION AMONG BN PARTIES CRITICAL FOR NATION'S SUCCESS

**Mahathir** - MCA

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 1.5 (Bernama) -- The cooperation among the component parties in the Barisan Nasional is critical in ensuring the future success of the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

There is no other political grouping or coalition in the world which is as successful as the BN, now 37 years in existence, he added.

+Thus, we should not destroy this unique characteristic which is important to the Barisan Nasional,+ he said when opening the MCA general assembly at Wisma MCA here.

Dr Mahathir, who is RN chairman, advised all BN component parties not to take for granted the cooperation that they had nurtured but to further enhance this cooperation and understanding.

He said the country's success in building the national economy was due to the unity and close cooperation among all ethnic groups at all levels.

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Rptng, replacing first para.

Mahathir - MCA 2 Kuala Lumpur

This prosperity and benefits could not be achieved by any other imitation coalition, he said.

Dr Mahathir reminded BN component parties to be wary and cautious of certain quarters, especially the opposition parties such as the DAP which would like to see the BN divided.

Opposition parties such as the DAP would rather see that the Chinese community isolate itself and not cooperate with the other races, and therefore the Chinese must always be cautious and not blindly follow or be easily influenced by the DAP's propaganda, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the BN could not compete with those who were-extreme on racial matters or those who misused religion.

+We see how the DAP, while opposing Chinese conversion to Islam, are unconcerned when Chinese became Christians, for instance,+ he said.

This opposition was part of the attitude of the DAP leaders who disliked Islam and the Malays, he said, and advised the non-Malay parties within the BN not to compete with the DAP in this matter. -- more

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Mahathir - MCA 3 Kuala Lumpur

+There is no coercion in Islam. Islam forbids any conversion through coercion or deceit, Those who wish to convert should accept Islam voluntarily.

+If they are tricked or coerced, they cannot be true Muslims and their reconversion to their original religion becomes their personal problem,+ he said.

As such, he said, there was no reason why the BN component parties should fall into the trap of the DAP which simply wanted to create issues.

+This is also true with the hudud (Islamic penal) laws which have been exploited by PAS to entrap Umno. PAS' hudud laws and Islamic hudud laws are two different things. Umno will never support PAS' hudud laws,+ he said.

Dr Mahathir said the unity existing in Malaysia was, among other things, based on a development programme which ensured that wealth was enjoyed by each ethnic group on a fair and equitable basis.

Everyone was given the opportunity to engage in business, and perhaps that was why the business community today was not making much +noise+ against the government,, he added. -- 'more

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Mahathir - MCA 4 Kuala Lumpur

+The government does not stop the Chinese community from expanding their businesses or prevent, them from access to education. But they themselves must realise how important it is for them to take into account the concept of fairness and equitable distribution of the nation's wealth among the ethnic groups,+ he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Chinese should not hesitate to support the Barisan Nasional government because past experiences had shown that if the Chinese were united and supportive of the Barisan Nasional, the government could achieve the objectives of developing the country rapidly.

He said looking back one would notice that -the development programmes of the country had benefitted all the races and the effects of development had been positive and the government had reduced the incidence of absolute poverty among the races.

The Prime Minister said he believed that the Chinese community would continue to support the MCA which he said was today not only stronger but also had succeeded in safeguarding the interests of the Chinese community in the context of a plural society.

This support, was evidenced by the success of the MCA in garnering financial assistance from the Chinese community for the Tunku Abdul Rahman College, he said.

+I have never before seen the Chinese community coming forward to answer the call by the MCA to assist it in ensuring the success of the project,+ he added. -- more

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Mahathir - MCA 5 (last) Kuala Lumpur

He said the MCA was more capable of uniting the Chinese in this country than the opposition parties such as the DAP for whom the sentiments of the Chinese were mere tools.

+I trust that the Chinese will continue to give their support to the MCA, which is one of the important partners of the Barisan Nasional. Only the Barisan Nasional can provide stability and prosperity and ensure that the wealth of the country is equitably distributed to all races, including the Chinese, + he said.

+I believe the delegates have a lot of things to discuss in this meeting. Our country practises democracy and hence, we are free to discuss any matter or issues. Freedom requires a sense of responsibility if we want to continue to be free.

+As a multi-racial country with many religions and cultures, we must always take into account the sensitivity of other races and the interest of the nation in discussing any issue ,+ he said.

Only in this way could the people avoid any conflict or disunity among them which could destroy everything that they had built, he added. --  
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