

Dr M: Barisan spirit must prevail

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. (f) Members of Barisan Nasional component parties should emulate their party leaders in behaving like members of a united family, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

They should develop the deep understanding and feeling of oneness in existence among BN component party leaders.

"The spirit of co-operation among the Barisan component parties is very good. There is much understanding and a deep feeling that we are all one family.

"This understanding must also extend to ordinary members of the component parties to further strengthen the Barisan Na-

sional and to stabilise national politics," he said when opening the MCA general assembly (See **also Page 4**).

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman, said there was no other political grouping or coalition in the world which was as successful as the Barisan, which is now in its 37th year.

"No one can deny that our standard of living is far higher and better than that of most developing countries."

More importantly, he said, the wealth created by the BN Government had been fairly equitably distributed to all.

"For the Chinese community, the opportunity to do business and engage in oth-

er economic activities is wide open so long as they are willing to work hard.

"Perhaps, this is the reason that the business community today is not making much 'noise' against the Government as there are ample business opportunities for them."

He added that the fact that Malaysia was experiencing steady growth was easily seen in the MCA's success in collecting millions of ringgit over a short period for the Tunku Abdul Rahman College Trust Fund.

"In an expanding economy, people are usually more generous."

Dr Mahathir said the country's success in building the national economy

was due to the unity and close co-operation among all ethnic groups at all levels.

Hence, to ensure that the country's rapid economic growth continued it was important for Malaysians to further enhance co-operation and-strengthen unity.

"Although the multi-racial population of this country live peacefully and respect each other, we must always be wary and cautious of certain quarters, especially the opposition parties who would like to see us divided."

He said the DAP, while opposing Chinese converting to Islam, were not concerned when Chinese became Christians.

"This opposition is part of the attitude of the DAP lead-

ers who dislike Islam and the Malays. The non-Malay parties within the Barisan should not compete with the DAP in this matter."

He said Islam forbade 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."

"This is also true with the *hudud* laws which have been exploited by Pas to trap Umno. Pas' *hudud* laws and Islamic *hudud* laws are two different things.

"Umno will never support Pas' hudud laws," he said to applause.