

PM: It's the moderate approach that works

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PENANG: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday the moderate and consensus approach adopted by the Barisan Nasional was the key to the nation's success.

He said although there was dissatisfaction among the coalition partners, such issues were resolved amicably.

He said the give-and-take attitude adopted by the component parties

has resulted in political stability and economic development.

Dr Mahathir attributed Malaysia's peace and harmony to the moderate attitude of the people who were against confrontational approach.

"Problems crop up now and then but they have been contained," he told a gathering of Barisan Nasional component parties at Dewan Sri Pinang.

He said the Barisan

concept was unique as it provided each component party a fair role to play in the government machinery and practised collective decision-making.

In certain countries, he said, the coalition government was formed after a general election to obtain the majority required to form a government.

"Such a coalition government will be weak as the minority party will make absurd demands,

thus causing an unhealthy partnership," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Barisan had always been fair in the allocations of seats to its component parties in general elections.

He pointed out that no one party could destroy the government by pulling out from the coalition.

"Even Umno, which holds the majority of seats in Parliament, will not be able to weaken the

government if it were to withdraw from Barisan.

"This is because Umno had not contested more than half of the seats in Parliament, although it could, as it wanted to be fair and share its seats with its partners," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the country had prospered tremendously after the May 1969 riots and was now a haven for investors because of the govern-

ment's liberal policies in pursuing economic development.

He also said the Malays and the Chinese should work closely to safeguard the economy of the country.

"It is better for the bumiputra to have a smaller stake in a company which reaps huge profits than a wholly-owned bumiputra concern which does not function effectively," he added.