

Elect far-sighted leaders, says PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Barisan Nasional component parties must ensure that they elect leaders who are far-sighted and have a vision as well as understand the constraints of a plural society like Malaysia, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the country did not need leaders who only looked after their own popularity but those who could lead the party and nation to greater success.

At the opening of the 22nd Gerakan annual delegates conference here, Dr Ma-

hathir said the concept of national administration used by the BN has been widely acknowledged within and without the country.

Many foreigners have come here to learn the BN concept, he said, adding that these people have been impressed by its successful implementation.

"They all know what is happening in other plural societies such as in Asia, Africa, Europe and America. Riots, suppression and murders are rampant in these places.

"The worst example is

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Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the Serbs had carried out and are continuing with their 'ethnic cleansing', an exercise far more terrible than a holocaust."

He reminded his audience on the proper use of democratic principles in party matters such as the elections. "If we contest just because we are allowed to do so or campaign unethically and resort to money politics or discredit a candidate unfairly, the party will be disunited and eventually be destroyed.

"This happened to Umno

in 1987. Democracy is like a sharp knife which if used carefully can carve beautiful sculptures, but on the other hand, it can also kill.

"Therefore, we must be careful in practising democracy."

He said the country has been fortunate in its practice of democracy because it has not brought disasters such as those seen in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

He added that Malaysia has been able to change its Government or leaders without any chaos.