

Dr M: Our --multi-racialism a plus

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — **Datuk** Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, extolling further the virtues of a united Malaysia, urged the people to continue to work together, develop a higher level of tolerance and strengthen their mutual respect for the sake of the country.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia had all the ingredients to continue to be successful. "We should consider our multi-racial and multi-religious society as a plus factor," he said.

He added that Malaysia had proven to the world that the Malays, Chinese, Indians, Kada-

zans and the other races can live in harmony and peace while working towards greater progress and prosperity.

"Therefore, there was no reason why the nation and the various communities could not progress further together,

The Prime Minister said this when opening the 40th MIC general assembly here today.

At the start of his speech, Dr Mahathir said certain foreign groups were disappointed that Malaysia has remained peaceful, stable and capable of developing rapidly.

He said these groups were uneasy to see that there were no clashes among the multi-racial population, unlike other multi-racial societies in other countries.

"There are groups which did not want to see unity in this country and they prefer that we be disunited," he said.

He said these groups would prefer to see racial clashes and disunity which would not help in the development of the country.

If this country was in turmoil, they could continue to believe that they were superior and

were more well versed in politics, he said, adding that they wanted to give advice and feel that they knew much more.

Dr Mahathir said these groups were more extreme and intolerant and had forgotten that during the colonial days they practised white superiority to the fullest.

He said these groups were now trying to act as if they were free of racial sentiments.

The Prime Minister said: "To

PLEASE TURN TO
PAGE 2, COL 1

Dr M: MIC is an important coalition partner

FROM PAGE ONE

them I would say, look at yourself first. You are less perfect than we are. In many ways you are still racist.

"You like to pass comment on others but when others comment on your behaviour you accuse them of being unduly sensitive.

"In fact it is you who are sensitive and intolerant, he said

He said that certain foreign media had commented that the Prime Minister's attendance at the assemblies of Barisan Nasional component parties was to endorse the leadership of these parties.

Reacting to this, Dr Ma-

hathir said: "In Malaysia, the chairman of the BN is not in the business of endorsing leaders of the component parties.

"He cannot even endorse the leaders in his own party. But in Malaysia we believe in goodwill and togetherness. It is for that reason, the chairman of the BN traditionally officiates at the opening of the general meetings of component parties."

Dr Mahathir said he was happy that the MIC, being a Barisan Nasional component party, was united, stable and strong and added that the MIC was now well accepted as a party that could look after the interest of the Indian community more effectively.

He said this was evident

from the many activities undertaken by the party to uplift the economic status of the Indians.

Dr Mahathir said the MIC might be a small party compared with Umno but the MIC was an important component in the coalition.

"In the Barisan Nasional all parties are equal and there is no party which is given less preferential treatment.

"We respect each other and work together. The opposition parties look after their own interests and that is why they are unable to establish an effective opposition front," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was now heading towards being a developed nation and since independence

the country had been securing a 6.7 per cent yearly growth rate.

"We need only to increase the growth rate by 0.3 per cent to achieve our objective of a yearly seven per cent growth rate," he said.

He said as the country developed there would be vast economic opportunities for all Malaysians, including Indians, and no one should be left behind in the development process.

He said the Government would ensure that no community would be ignored.

"But Malaysians should not solely depend on the Government to help them. The people must strive to seize the economic opportunities that are made available," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the leadership of the country was important and this would reflect on the quantum of success a country achieved.

He said Malaysia had always had leaders who had placed the importance of the people and the country above everything else.

The Prime Minister said the people had an important role to play in selecting leaders who were responsible, able, sincere and possessed a vision to look after the interest of the people.

He said: "If we make a wrong choice, or if we change leaders for no apparent reason, or to entertain any particular individual's ambitions, then the losers will be the people and the nation."