

PM: Strong MCA augurs well for the Barisan

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The increasing support for the MCA shows that the party is now more acceptable to the Chinese community and this augurs well for the Barisan Nasional, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said a strong MCA meant that BN would become even stronger.

In congratulating the party leaders and members for their hard work in making MCA a strong and respected party, he said the community should continue to support the party as it was the only one which could safeguard the interests of the Chinese in the context of a multi-racial society.

"The MCA is also acceptable to Umno and other

component parties as it is not extreme or racist.

"It can also resolve problems in a rational way, quiet but effective," he said at the opening of the 41st MCA annual general meeting at Wisma MCA, here.

Dr Mahathir also said that it was important that the people support the Barisan Nasional Government for the country's continued stability, development and prosperity.

The Government was a "tested" one and had proven its ability to fulfil the needs and aspirations of all races, he said, adding the BN Government was fair to all races and gave priority to their interests and those of the country.

"As a result, the country

enjoys peace and prosperity and is free from any racial strife."

Dr Mahathir drew applause from the delegates when he said that the country's successes in various fields had drawn worldwide attention and many countries had even indicated their intention to learn from Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said the moderate BN Government also strongly opposed any form of extremism.

"Extremism, racial or religious, in a multi-racial and multi-religious country like Malaysia will only bring about instability and riots," he added.

Dr Mahathir, who is also

□ PLEASE TURN TO
PAGE 4, COL 3

Dr Mahathir: Opposition parties are smearing country's good name

□ FROM PAGE ONE

the BN chairman, said that despite the country's successes, there were certain quarters who were unhappy and had criticised and alleged that the country was undemocratic, unfair and had no respect for human rights.

"What is more disappointing is that there are opposition politicians who are influenced by this or have joined in such efforts to smear the country's image. They (opposition politicians) even supply false information to these people," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Government was aware of individuals and opposition politicians who alleged, among other things, that there was

no freedom of speech through their interviews with the foreign media.

"The fact that they can express their opinions and provide incorrect information only shows that they are lying," he said, adding that the Government was disappointed with the actions of these opposition politicians which he described as "betraying the country".

"The difference between BN members and the opposition parties is that BN members are responsible for maintaining the country's image, to develop the nation and preserving harmony and peace.

"On the other hand, the opposition parties do not have any programmes for the good of the country.

"Besides, these opposition parties only know how to reject facts and criticise the country's success, knowing that such actions would be detrimental to the country and the people."

Dr Mahathir also spoke of some opposition parties which had even belittled the country in the international arena.

"They even accuse Malaysia of aiding the Bosnians through its participation in the United Nations peace-keeping force in Bosnia-Herzegovina ... when they have done nothing for the Bosnian victims."

He reiterated that it was Malaysia's sovereign right as an independent nation to voice opinions and views on issues that involved the country and other develop-

ing nations.

On talk about an early general election, Dr Mahathir said the "election fever" had already started and attributed this to the opposition parties.

"It is believed that the opposition started this and fearing that this will only affect their own members, they have also decided to spread the fever to the Barisan Nasional members," he said, drawing laughter from the delegates.

He reminded the delegates that the BN had the mandate to rule the country until October next year and said: "We have yet to decide on the date."

However, all BN component parties must be ready to face the general election any time.

He said the opposition parties were worried due to lack of issues.

He said there was a party which was so desperate that it abandoned its so called liberal policy.

It tried to get Malay support by changing its name and claiming to be a Malay party for the Malays.

However, when they were confronted by non-Malays, they claimed to be championing the cause of non-Malays, he said.

He said it was the same with a party which claimed to be championing the cause of the Chinese but when challenged to do something for the Chinese, they denied championing the cause of the Chinese.