

Coalition reflects philosophies of various

BN confident of

communities, says PM

mandate

By Manan Osman

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Barisan Nasional is not just a coalition of political parties sharing a common cause and understanding but also an alliance reflecting the philosophies of the various communities, religions, cultures and beliefs.

The Prime Minister and chairman of the BN said the coalition's concept of sharing power among the ethnic political parties had proven to be beneficial and had since become a model and inspiration for other developing countries.

It is these elements that have made the Prime Minister express his confidence of a big victory in the general election, saying that the BN's optimism was based on reality.

Dr Mahathir, in his message in conjunction with the BN convention on Saturday, the first ever since its inception in 1974, said: "We will go to the people to ask for their mandate and confidence in administering the nation.

"I am confident that we will be given the mandate based on our performance in the Government."

He described the general election as a daunting and major test for the party which it had to face "very soon."

He said the BN's credibility and position at present was extremely strong and God willing, could repeat its performance in the general election.

"In fact, we are confident that our achievement would be much better than in 1990 (general election)," the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, added that the nation's development was progressing dynamically in all fields. This is coupled by the unity and

strength of the BN component parties.

He said the fact that the country had achieved rapid progress in all fields since independence was unique in international history.

Developing countries whose community pattern was almost similar to Malaysia's had expressed interest to emulate or learn the country's ways and methods.

The Prime Minister reiterated that the success and development achieved by the country did not come easily but rather as a result of the co-operation of all races.

He said: "It is not because the Malays can tolerate the Chinese or the Chinese can tolerate the Malays or the Malays are willing to accommodate the Indians and so on.

"But our success, unity and brotherly relations among the various races, can be achieved because everyone of us is confident that racial integration can only be undertaken through political, economic, social and cultural programmes which are realistic and pragmatic, and which respect the interests of every group in the country."

Dr Mahathir said the idea of power sharing was to enable the people to enjoy equal treatment, adding that the sovereignty of the people depended on the Dewan Rakyat.

He said in the country's parliamentary democracy system, the people, irrespective of race, religion and belief, were given the power to choose their representatives in a democratic way.

He said since independence in 1957, the system had undergone changes suitable with the needs and interest of the people but the system remained steady.

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Dr M: Barisan must repeat performance

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fast and unwavering, thus enabling the people to choose their own Government.

"Some groups, envious of the BN's power and voice in the Dewan Rakyat, tend to forget that the victory was a result of the people's votes, which were obtained in a democratically-held election.

"They tried to bring in people from outside to control the election in 1990 but

it was apparent that the election was held in accordance with democratic practice."

Dr Mahathir said the BN had to repeat its performance this time around not because it was power crazy but because it was the only party capable, based on its past records, to continue with the nation's development and progress towards Vision 2020.

He also warned the people of a more challenging fu-

ture, stressing that if they did not bother to strengthen their unity, all that had been achieved would come to naught.

He said the people must be willing to set aside past prejudices and dare to accept challenges of the future.

Old practices which could obstruct progress should also be discarded, he added.

He said the opposition had tried to emulate the BN formula by forming the Gaga-

san Rakyat and Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah but their attempts failed as they were more concerned about getting seats and power.

The day-long convention at Dewan Merdeka, Putra World Trade Centre will be participated by 3,700 people including Cabinet Ministers, Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers and members of the Dewan Rakyat and Dewan Negara.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to open the convention.