

Dr M: Work for our future generations

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Barisan Nasional Charter and Rakyat's Declaration will help remind the coalition of its responsibilities to the nation and people.

The Prime Minister said everyone concerned with the charter must make sure that they adhere closely to it. All components of the BN must also work hard to maintain and strengthen the coalition's "spirit of co-operation and tolerance".

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman and Umno president, said this in his opening address at the one-day BN convention at the Putra World Trade Centre. A total of 3,709 delegates registered for the convention.

Closed-circuit television at the PWTC and RTM's live coverage of the address enabled thousands more to follow the convention's opening ceremony. (See Page 15 for full speech).

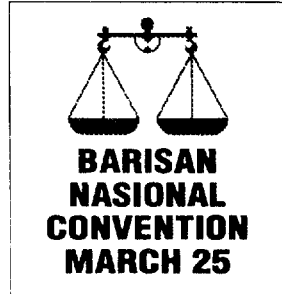
"Do not take this conven-

tion lightly. Do not forget to work hard. Do not forget to improve our discipline. Remember that we need another 25 years to reach the year 2020, when we hope to be a developed nation.

"We need at least another 25 years to implement all the policies that we have formulated. Only then can we be regarded as equals. All of us must also realise that we are not working for ourselves, but rather for our children, our grandchildren.

"In other words, we are working for our future generation. This is the Malaysia that we want. No one else can make this happen, except ourselves."

Speaking for slightly more than an hour from the rostrum without a prepared text, Dr Mahathir likened the BN to an abacus. "The spirit of co-operation in the BN is like an abacus. You pull here and push there, it all adds up very well."



He said that the BN has grown to a size that has no comparison with any other political party in the world. He added that the component parties originated from different backgrounds, but they have shown that they can work together.

The Prime Minister also took advantage of this year's biggest gathering of the BN supporters to remind components to support whoever was selected to contest in the coming general election.

"Let me repeat my plea

regarding the choice of candidates for the election. All BN parties must support whoever is chosen to contest in the election. Support the party regardless of the person selected.

"I've said that we may pick candidates who may not be linked to any party within the coalition. But this is only a test. We have not decided on this yet.

"If the person is selected, and wins in the election, then he may join whichever party he wishes after the poll. This should be seen as part of the BN's process of evolution and expansion.

"Hence, when the candidates are chosen, I hope there will be no more questions once they have been picked to contest."

Dr Mahathir also had some words on the Opposition. While acknowledging the role of a constructive Opposition, the Prime Minister said the DAP could not be regarded as one because

"it doesn't oppose logically".

He said the DAP has a tendency to oppose just because it is an Opposition party. "Sometimes it would oppose well before the Government could say or start anything. If you ask them why they oppose, the answer you'll get is because it is an Opposition party! Well, that's the DAP for you."

He said other opposition members tend to adopt a fanatical position. Ordinary members of this opposition party believe that everything is wrong, unless declared otherwise by their leaders.

"This is their narrow view. They go around believing their leaders are always right even though they have committed obvious offences. To them, as long as their members or leaders wear skullcaps, are turbaned, wear robes and have a beard, they can't be wrong."