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Mahathir-Gerakan

PICK LEADERS WHO CARE FOR THE NATION, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 5 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will continue to be stable and progressive if its people continue to choose leaders who are pragmatic, rational and moderate and who place the nation above all else, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said leaders who gained popularity by only raising communal issues would not last long.

"They do not think of the wider implications and consequences they cause, like the threat to racial harmony and stability in the country," he said when opening the 25th Gerakan national delegates' conference, here.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman and Umno president, also expressed his appreciation to former national leaders Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Tun V.T. Sambanthan, Tun Abdul Razak, Tun Hussein Onn, Tun Tan Siew and Tan Sri V.Manickavasagam, who have all died.

He said they served as good models for Malaysians who wanted to lead the country because they possessed leadership qualities easily accepted by the people of various races.

"Actually, it is not easy to meet the needs of all the communities. But the government and BN leaders must be pragmatic and rational, we have to view racial issues from a wider perspective," he said.

Dr Mahathir said BN leaders would consider racial issues that do not affect the national interest in the spirit of compromise and try to avoid bringing sensitive matters "in the open".

However, BN would not "sweep the problems under the carpet" but once a decision was made, all BN parties must abide by it, he said.

This spirit of cooperation among the BN component parties was the foundation of BN's strength and success.

"Sometimes outsiders wonder how BN parties representing the various communities can cooperate.

"This is the uniqueness of our political system which only we can understand and value," he added.

The prime minister also reminded the BN component parties to enhance the people's awareness and understanding of the government's projects and policies so that they could give their full cooperation and support.

"In this way, we can also foil any attempt by certain parties to influence the people to oppose the government's projects and policies," he said.

The government was giving serious attention to the information technology (IT) industry and had set up the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) to attract multimedia and IT firms to set up their industries here, he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia could not be just an observer and must get involved if it did not want to be left behind in the information age.

The MSC, he said, was one of the government's efforts to ensure that Malaysia would continue to progress and become a developed nation by 2020.

Present were BN secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, MIC president Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu and the leaders of other BN components.

A total of 1,265 delegates are attending the conference. -- BERNAMA  
TCL JK