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BN parties urged to support smart partnership concept

Badrul Hisham Mahzan; Joniston Bangkui

TAWAU, Sun. - Urging Barisan Nasional component parties to support the concept of smart partnership, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it would not only make the country politically stronger but economically healthier.

He said the concept was based on fair distribution of wealth among the people.

"We cannot satisfy everybody because there will certainly be overlapping of demands by certain political parties or races," Dr Mahathir said when opening the Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) general assembly here today.

Hence, he added, everyone must make certain sacrifices if the country was to remain peaceful and the economic growth to further expand.

Also present were Sabah Chief Minister and SAPP president Datuk Yong Teck Lee, representatives of BN component parties and State Ministers, among others.

"Our economic cake will be bigger and our shares will also be larger. However, we may not get anything even if the whole cake belongs to us when there is no political stability," he added.

He had earlier arrived directly from Hong Kong after delivering a keynote address at the International Monetary Fund/World Bank seminar there.

Dr Mahathir said smart partnership was a BN concept and as long as the coalition members subscribed to it, they could achieve almost anything.

He also said BN could not be one single party because the largest group in the party would take everything while the smaller groups ended up with nothing.

"It is better to group all the parties in a smart partnership and the result is that we have become the most developed among the developing countries," he said.

Elaborating on the nation's economic situation, Dr Mahathir said that there was recently an attempt made by greedy foreigners to ransack its economy.

"They depreciate our currency and stock market. They do so without caring about the consequences of their action, leading the poor to become poorer," he said.

He added BN could overcome this threat provided its members worked as a team to defeat the rogue speculators.

"A strong and united BN is essential to fight those who are out to cause damage to our economy," he said.

Reminding the SAPP delegates of the unity among Umno, MIC and MCA during the pre-independence period, Dr Mahathir said the British had no other alternative but to grant Malaysia its independence.

"At that time, we were poor and the members were not highly educated but we defeated the British simply by being united," he said.

"If we could fight the British then when we were poor, there is no reason why we cannot fight the rogue speculators who have stolen our money," he said.

He said the West was only hurting themselves if they continued to subscribe to the concept of "poor thy neighbour," adding that they would not be rich for long.

"If they continue with this policy of making us poor, they will be the ones to suffer in the end when we can no longer import their goods because

we do not have any money to pay for them," he said.

Dr Mahathir said BN now controlled all States except Kelantan which was still ruled by Pas whose leaders manipulated the Islamic religion to gain power.

He also chided them for making baseless allegation that the haze was God's punishment to BN leaders for looking down on ulama.

He added the people could not accept such leaders to rule the country who used the religion for their own political interest.

Prior to Dr Mahathir's arrival, the Tawau airport was closed due to poor visibility caused by the haze. All morning flights from Kota Kinabalu to Tawau were cancelled.

As a result, there was much concern that the Prime Minister's aircraft from Hong Kong would not be able to land.

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