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Dr M: Use posts to implement policies which benefit nation

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has reminded Barisan Nasional leaders not to abuse their positions but to use them to implement policies for the benefit of the country.

He said the responsibility entrusted to them must be taken seriously.

"They should not be over-confident of the people's support of the BN Government," he said when opening the Gerakan's 26th annual delegates' conference at Bangunan PGRM here.

Present were Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik and leaders of BN component parties including MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak president Datuk Leo Moggie and People's Progressive Party president Datuk M. Kayveas.

Dr Mahathir, who is also BN chairman, said coalition party leaders and members should not be arrogant and complacent but instead be humble and remain close to the people.

BN leaders and members must also be prepared to listen to grievances and problems of the rakyat and strive to resolve them.

"It is a heavy responsibility," he said, "but remember that it is us who chose to be a wakil rakyat, so we must carry out our duty."

Stressing that the people were now wiser and matured in evaluating issues and would no longer accept them just like that, Dr Mahathir warned that the BN Government would lose popular support if members were preoccupied with their positions and not solving the people's problems.

"Therefore, we must work hard to ensure that we receive continuous support," he said. "We must also prevent internal squabbles as this will only weaken us."

Dr Mahathir said BN leaders and members must be able to convince the people that it was only the coalition which could ensure the well-being of the nation.

The Prime Minister also alluded to the requests and demands made by BN component parties, adding that the Government could not possibly accommodate all of them.

Citing the privatisation programme, he said all races enjoyed the benefits - entrepreneurs who were awarded the projects, workers and the common people who bought shares of the privatised companies and those who used the facilities and services.

He said it was impossible to meet the demands of all races as often they overlap or run contrary to the interests of each other.

"If those in power entertain the demands of one race only, they would only be popular with its own race but will be criticised or rejected by the other races."

Thus, Dr Mahathir said the Government could only entertain half of the demands of the various races, causing dissatisfaction among them.

"But they will know that the BN does not practice favouritism and will continue to give their support."

As a sensitive Government, Dr Mahathir said it listened to honest and constructive comments which were often taken into consideration.

"In matters considered as a bit sensitive to be discussed openly, they are raised at the BN supreme council or the Cabinet."

Touching on information technology, Dr Mahathir said existing approaches and strategies in developing the country might no longer be relevant.

"As in the past, we have to review the situation while adopting changes. This is unavoidable if we want to continue to progress.

"I'm confident that if we had refused to industrialise our economy and continue to depend on tin and rubber, we will remain backward and poor while at the same time, experience serious social and political problems."

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