

28/06/1998

Barisan parties told to remain united

Ramlan Said; Alex Choong; Cheah Chor Sooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded Barisan Nasional component parties of the importance of unity, saying that quarrels would weaken the government and stifle economic recovery.

The Prime Minister and BN chairman said political instability would make it difficult for the government to implement measures to revive the economy.

"Our strength is the BN. All component parties must be strong, understand the economic problems and give full support to the government in overcoming them," he said at the opening of the Gerakan conference.

Among BN component party leaders present were MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, BN secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, Umno secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik, PPP president Datuk M. Kayveas and LDP president Datuk Chong Kah Kiat.

Dr Mahathir said it was the responsibility of all BN component parties and their members to be united in defending the nation.

He said the economic problems were serious and difficult to overcome but Malaysia had been able to withstand the pressures so far because of its political stability.

"The government is strong because the 14 coalition partners in the BN are united and work with one heart," he said, adding that this close co-operation was reflected in the Gerakan's slogan of 'One Heart, One Nation, One Vision'.

The Prime Minister also spoke on the economic and social achievements attained by the country under BN's administration, saying other parties like Pas and the DAP would not be able to achieve that with their policies.

Dr Mahathir advised Gerakan members and BN component parties not to be influenced by foreign propaganda, citing as example allegations that the government practised nepotism and cronyism.

He said foreigners could easily blame the government which would not have much impact but when Malaysians got influenced by these allegations and started to say the same things, problems could arise.

"If we constantly fight within the party and within the BN, the government will be weak and will not be able to overcome the economic problems."

Responding to the allegations of nepotism and cronyism, Dr Mahathir said such practices were not alien in the West.

"The cooperation between Wall Street and the US government is cronyism. The US government is protecting Wall Street and its desire to take over big companies all over the world.

"This is happening because the US is not taking action to stop them. This is cronyism but, of course, they don't talk about it."

(END)