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Mahathir-Tolerance

DR MAHATHIR WANTS PEOPLE TO BE MORE TOLERANT

KOTA KINABALU, Aug 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged all groups to take into account the sensitivities of the multi-racial society in Malaysia to preserve racial harmony.

He said it was not difficult to maintain racial harmony in Malaysia as it only required a little effort and tolerance among the various races.

"Intolerance can cause racial problems. In Malaysia, we must remember this. Barisan Nasional component parties in particular must remember the importance of being tolerant to other parties," he said when opening the Ninth Congress of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) here today.

He said there were many examples in other countries how intolerance had triggered racial and religious unrest.

" They will fight with each other and this goes not only with different religious groups but even within the same religion you find people fighting because of minor interpretation of things," he said.

He cited the clashes among fellow Muslims in Algeria and between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland to the extent of killing innocent children due to sect differences.

Dr Mahathir, who is also chairman of the ruling BN, advised component parties to enhance their tolerance and resolve their problems through negotiations.

In any organisation, there were bound to be differences in opinion not only among the leaders but also the members.

" But all groups must negotiate to achieve the best possible solution and after that, all people must support the decision.

" The important thing is how you settle the differences. You have to discuss... you reach a conclusion even if the majority's decision is not accepted by the minority but after the decision has been made, you must close ranks and support the decision. That is the way the party should function," he said.

In the context of the upcoming State Election in Sabah, Dr Mahathir said, component parties must accept the reality that they had the responsibility to support and ensure the victory of the other component party chosen to contest in a constituency.

He said the BN's concept was to support a BN candidate irrespective of which component party he came from.

On the State Election, Dr Mahathir said in jest, "it will be held soon but when, I don't know. So, don't try to guess."

The current five-year term of the Sabah State Legislative Assembly ends in March next year.

In his policy speech, LDP president Datuk Chong Kah Kiat also stressed on tolerance and cooperation among BN component parties to ensure a thumping victory for the BN besides maintaining a two-third majority in the assembly.

Chong urged the Chinese community, who formed the backbone of the LDP, to give solid support for the BN which had proven its ability to develop the country.

-- BERNAMA

KG/JS TS