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Mahathir-BN

MAHATHIR WANTS FULL COOPERATION OF THE SABAH BARISAN NASIONAL

KOTA KINABALU, Aug 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties in Sabah to forge closer cooperation and set aside other interests to ensure the BN victory in the next state election.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said that Parti Demokratik Sabah (PDS) headed by Sabah Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok had a vital responsibility in ensuring a victory for the BN.

"Make BN a success because the BN's success is our party's success and our party's success is the success of our race and our own success.

"I am confident that the PDS will continue to strive based on the BN principles to make a success of the BN in Sabah especially in the next election," he said when addressing delegates to the Fourth PDS Congress here.

Dr Mahathir said that the BN component parties in Sabah should give priority to the BN's struggles over their own or their party's interests.

He reminded the Sabah BN component parties not to strive only in pursuit of positions in the government or party.

"Our struggles are for the sake of the people. We are in the party for a noble cause. The BN exists because we have big ambitions to turn our country into a developed nation by 2020," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the BN could win any election if the component parties were united.

He said that members of the BN component parties should not give in to sentiments and refrain from supporting the BN candidates whom they disapprove.

"Our sentiments are not important and we have to ensure that the BN candidate will win based on the number of votes and the break down of the votes according to the various races.

"If we were to give in to sentiments, we will lose," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that leaders of political parties appointed as ministers should strive to ensure the interest and welfare of the people who voted for them and the BN.

"We do not become ministers because our ancestors were ministers or to drive a Mercedes Benz or to lead a life of luxury. We have to live up to the expectation of the people," he said.

The prime minister expressed regret that Sabah was lagging behind the other states in terms of the pace of economic development.

This, he said, was due to the attitude of the leaders of the opposition party heading the previous government which only had differences with the federal government.

"All they did was to vent their anger towards the federal government. As such, the people of Sabah have suffered," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that when he visited Sabah after the state was returned to the BN in the last state election in 1994, he found that there was inadequate water supply to the people and some roads had no lights.

"The situation did not truly reflect Malaysia," he said.

The prime minister gave an assurance that the BN government would enlarge the nation's economic cake so that a larger chunk could be enjoyed by the haves-not.

He said that the government would also protect the interest of the wealthy and businessmen because the taxes collected from them were utilised

to develop the country and carry out social activities.

Among those present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and BN secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat.

After the function, Dr Mahathir who is Umno president, attended a closed-door meeting with state Umno leaders.

Also present at the meeting was former Deputy Prime Minister Tun Ghafar Baba.

-- BERNAMA

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