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BN parties told to support one another

LABUAN, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on Barisan Nasional component parties to support all candidates from the coalition, irrespective of the party of origin.

The Prime Minister said members of component parties should not view BN candidates as coming from individual parties.

Speaking to reporters after a closed-door meeting with Labuan BN component party leaders, he said: "It is important for all parties to support each other and win the election."

During the hour-long meeting, Dr Mahathir said, he also briefed the 200 leaders from Umno, Gerakan, MCA, and Sabah Progressive Party on the latest political developments.

Dr Mahathir had earlier held a closed-door meeting with Labuan Umno leaders. Among those present at both functions were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali and Labuan MP Datuk Abdol Mulok Awang Damit.

"I also explained to them the reasons for the expulsion of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from the Government and party.

On the Opposition, he said: "They are inciting the people to hate the BN and me so they (the people) must vote for them. But the Opposition has nothing to offer to the people who will vote for them."

He said the Labuan BN was aware of what the BN Government had done for the people and was ready for the polls.

"At the Umno closed door meeting, I told them to prepare and follow directives from (party) headquarters," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived this morning, proceeded to the Financial Park for the closed-door meeting with Labuan Umno.

At the Financial Park convention hall, he launched a book entitled Tourist and Business Guide and VCD on Labuan Tourism, and the Labuan Development Authority's homepage.

Dr Mahathir also launched another book entitled Layang Layang: Drop in the Ocean, on marine life at the Layang Layang group of islands by University Malaysia Sarawak deputy vice-chancellor Prof Ghazally Ismail, Nicholas Pilcher and Steve Oakley.

Speaking to a large crowd that filled the Dataran Merdeka here tonight Dr Mahathir said all races in the country are represented in the Government through the 14 BN component parties.

"All races now enjoy the fruits of unity brought about by the BN Government.

"No one can deny the success of the coalition in developing the country."

Dr Mahathir said the Malays, who at one time felt that they were not given due opportunities in economic development, were now enjoying economic stability.

The non-Malays, who at one time felt left out of the country's political mainstream, were now well-represented in the Government.

He said with the unity and support from the multi-racial population, the BN would continue to bring development to the people.

He acknowledged the thousands who turned up tonight, saying he had never seen such a big crowd in Langkawi.

"Labuan is smaller than Langkawi, but I have never seen a big gathering like this in Langkawi," he said to loud applause from the audience.

The Prime Minister will be attending functions at Lahad Datu, Tawau and Kota Kinabalu tomorrow. He will launch a joint-venture project involving the cultivation of 11,000ha of oil palm in Bagahak, about 50km from Lahad Datu.

The joint venture between State-owned Sawit Group of Companies and smallholders is under the Hardcore Poor Eradication Programme.

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