

18/07/1999

Ling: People's discipline, unity helped recovery

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today Malaysia managed to lift itself out of the recent economic crisis due to the unity and discipline of its people.

"Improvement in the economy was achieved because the various races were united and disciplined in facing the crisis," he said at the opening of the 46th MCA general assembly at the party headquarters.

The assembly, attended by more than 2,400 delegates, was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Ling said the political and social stability which Malaysians had been enjoying was very strong and had not been threatened.

"This is one point which sets Malaysia apart from the other Asian countries which were affected by the economic crisis."

He said the Government and the people had made a lot of sacrifices and efforts to overcome economic difficulties, and this spirit of co-operation and contribution had allowed Malaysia to recover from the crisis.

"It cannot be denied that the visionary leadership of Dr Mahathir was a very important factor that prevented our economy from being attacked and controlled by foreigners.

"It is, in fact, not wrong to say that Dr Mahathir was the saviour of our economy," he said, adding that everyone should appreciate his efforts.

Dr Ling also said although the political climate had changed a little, the various races in Malaysia would still strongly support the Barisan Nasional in the next general election.

"There is no other coalition which can bring development, political stability, social harmony and economic progress besides the Barisan Nasional," he said.

He pledged MCA's full support for every Barisan Nasional candidate in the next general election to ensure that the coalition is returned with as convincing a mandate as in the previous general election.

On the MCA party election, Dr Ling said he was very happy to see members emphasising party unity and stability, which resulted in branch, division and State elections proceeding smoothly.

He said at branch level, 96 per cent of new office-bearers were elected without contest, while at division level, 75 per cent of new faces were brought in the same way.

For the MCA Youth and Wanita elections at State level, 80 per cent of the posts were won without contest.

"Compromise should not be seen as a betrayal of principle or as a sign of weakness, but rather, the manifestation of strength, wisdom and political maturity. It is the way to move forward."

Dr Ling said the emphasis on encouraging women to join the party had paid off with 60,000 women applying to join MCA Wanita since last year.

"With the increase in women members, a new culture within the MCA will be born, where there will be more caring, sensitivity and harmony, which will strengthen the unity of the party."

On the issue of education, he said the MCA would continue to expand Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman to enable the college to play a greater role in the development of education in Malaysia.