

26/02/1999

50-year-old MCA reaffirms pledges

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Fifty years on, the MCA reaffirmed on behalf of the Chinese last night that it was entwined with the Malaysian socio-political fabric and still willing to work with other races for Malaysia's future.

At its Golden Jubilee dinner bash at Stadium Nasional in Bukit Jalil, the party, through its president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, pledged before the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad its faith in his leadership besides espousing the Barisan Nasional's multi-racial philosophy.

Dr Mahathir, who was the guest-of-honour, acknowledged the pledge by expressing confidence that the MCA, as the cornerstone for the Chinese community, would go on to celebrate its 100th anniversary.

He noted that not many parties in Malaysia could last as long as 50 years.

"This is unique," he said in reference to the multi-racial celebration of the MCA anniversary.

Paying tribute to the Chinese community for its business acumen, he said despite the intense attack from foreign currency traders, the Chinese business community did not reel or lose faith in the system.

He added, instead, the community rallied behind the Government's strategies to help revive the economy.

"You were willing to share and co-operate with other races, especially with Bumiputeras ... and you supported the New Economic Policy to restructure the economy," he said.

The MCA's political philosophy of working with other races was reflected in the show presented to guests.

First there was a "big drums" performance by 24 pupils of SRJK (C) Sin Min, Semenyih.

Then the Professional Cultural Centre's orchestra presented a classic Chinese song but later fused flawlessly with Indian tabla and Malay kompang players to perform the timeless tunes of Chan Mali Chan, Tanjung Katong and Rasa Sayang.

And driving home the message of unity and harmony, singers Siti Nurhaliza and Penny Cheah performed a duet of a Mandarin tune called Wish.

The highlight of the evening was the performance of the Caring and Sharing Choir comprising prominent party leaders and members.

Also present at the dinner were Cabinet Ministers and Barisan Nasional component party leaders.

Earlier, Dr Ling paid tribute to past MCA leaders who helped the party survived the formative years when many members were killed or injured by communist terrorists.

He also alluded to the very effective partnership with Umno and later MIC to form the Alliance which endures to this day.

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