

05 AUG 1999

Mahathir-BN

PEOPLE MUST CONTINUE SUPPORTING BN - DR M

MIRI, Aug 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the people must continue to support Barisan Nasional (BN) for the government to achieve its goal of making Malaysia a developed country in 2020.

There must be political stability and no communal clashes in the country until then, and this was only possible if the BN remained in power, he said.

"We need BN rule to enable the government to focus its attention on developing the nation during the period," he told a meet-the-people session attended by some 20,000 people at City Fan Miri, a public square here, tonight.

Claiming that opposition parties did not have the ability to administer the country, Dr Mahathir said they would destroy what had been developed by the BN if they came to power.

He said supporting the BN was just like supporting oneself because the coalition worked for the people irrespective of race.

Dr Mahathir said the BN (along with the Alliance before the BN's formation) was the only party that had succeeded in creating racial harmony in the country since Independence.

"That's the BN's philosophy. Other parties do not give priority to racial ties," he said.

The DAP, for instance, would favour only the clever people with its stress on meritocracy, while PAS spoke about establishing an Islamic state without taking the non-Muslims into consideration, he said.

The BN's philosophy of cooperation among the races had removed any feelings of fear for the other communities and ensured that there were no racial clashes in the country, said Dr Mahathir.

He said that during the economic slowdown, many countries came severe pressure resulting in communal clashes, deaths and looting.

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The prime minister said that as there was only 20 years left to achieve the developed nation goal, political and economic stability must be enhanced.

"We are progressing. We want all the people to progress just like in advanced nations," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is on a two-day visit to Sarawak, said the people in the state could contribute to the country's development and this was made possible by close federal-state ties.

"Believe me that with our cooperation in the BN, Miri and Sarawak will

continue to progress along with other states in the country.
-- BERNAMA
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