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PM: Barisan needed to ensure development

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BARISAN Nasional (BN) must win the general election because it still has unfinished business, Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says.

He said there is still a lot of work that needs to be done to achieve the vision of making Malaysia a fully developed nation at par with other developed countries in the world.

"This is not possible to achieve simply through the passage of time. There is a lot of work to do," Dr Mahathir said when launching a nation-building camp for BN Wanita members in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He said the development of a country takes a long time and is not a one-day affair. While some areas in Malaysia may be fully developed, there are still others which are left behind.

Dr Mahathir said with the increasing role of information and digital technology, for example, there is a need to educate and equip Malaysians with these new skills, as well as to prepare the necessary infrastructure. He said this long-term vision and the close cooperation among BN's 14 component parties to develop the country is what sets the National Front apart from the Opposition's "Alternative Coalition".

"We have a vision, they don't. Their coalition is a coalition for the elections, while ours is a coalition for the nation's development. The BN is not a fly-by-night party like the Opposition. Our marriage is a permanent one," Dr Mahathir said.

BN must be victorious in the coming general election because only BN can lead the country towards greater heights, he said, adding that some of BN's successes over the years include racial harmony, peace and stability, affirmative action for Bumiputeras, and industrialisation.

"The BN concept is a winning concept, whether it is in the social aspect, politics or the economy. That is why we must continue to support BN. Individuals do not matter. It is BN that forms the Government. If only I win in the elections and BN loses, it is of no use either," Dr Mahathir said.

He called on BN component parties to put aside personal feelings and close ranks once candidates for the general election are announced, and to support them regardless of their respective component political affiliation.

"Once we determine the candidates, there should be no more questions. BN must close ranks when the decision (of candidates) is made, no matter how bitter it is to accept. We must put aside our personal feelings," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the component parties in the Opposition's coalition, meanwhile, are already arguing over seat allocation and candidates for the election. Dr Mahathir said he doubts the coalition - comprising Pas, DAP, PRM, and Keadilan - will be able to agree on a workable solution.

"Keadilan, for example, has no bargaining clout. Their first struggle will be how to get keadilan (justice) from their friends in the coalition," he added.

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