

# PM: Gerakan to keep Penang

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Party given trust to lead the state even if other component parties win more seats, says Mahathir

PENANG. Sat: Gerakan will continue to lead the Penang state government, Barisan Nasional (BN) president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"Based on the loyalty and spirit of friendship among the BN component parties, Gerakan will continue to be given the trust to lead the state.

"Even if Gerakan has fewer state seats than the other component parties, which are Umno and MCA, the state leadership will continue to be given to Gerakan," the prime Minister said when opening the Gerakan's 29th National Delegates Conference at Hotel Equatorial Penang.

His wards were received with thunderous applause from the 1,800 delegates and observers.

Asked 'later if he meant this is for now or also for the future, Mahathir said: "This is also for the future. We have to share, in a just manner, among the component parties.

"In one place, one party is given a post while in another, another party gets it. All will be accorded due consideration, assured of their place and none to be left without.

"This is not an easy task to

undertake as some posts attract the keen interest of all."

Mahathir said coalitions in other countries do not work because members scramble for posts and those who do not get one, will leave and cause the government to collapse.

In BN, although there is a tussle, the moderation and willingness to give and take, ensured continued unity and enabled BN to remain in power, he added.

He hoped all BN component parties would adopt this attitude to ensure the nation continues to have a strong government capable of maintaining progress and stability.

He said the culture of goodwill, unselfishness and trust in each other as nurtured by BN gives the people confidence to continue to support the government, and this must be treasured and guarded.

"Penang is Gerakan's main base since its inception (as a political party). The party has many members here and has turned Penang into its stronghold, and then spread elsewhere.

"Gerakan today is influential and continues to be a strong and loyal component

(of BN)."

Mahathir also congratulated Gerakan and its candidates for defeating opposition figures deemed invincible in the last general election.

"They are now out of the political arena but are still trying to exert their influence in politics through the Internet. They say race relationship has gone really bad

and the government must do something about it.

"In this hall, we can see how the different races can sit together which proves that we can have differences

in opinions without being enemies. And this is the result of the system and philosophy of BN."

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