

'We are one race'

He said the shift from a coalition to a one-party concept will be slow and gradual because anything done in haste will result in "us falling down flat on our faces".

Mahathir said all component party leaders spoke with equal emphasis in support of his call to serve all Malaysians regardless of race, reflecting their commitment to the BN's cause of struggling for the people and country.

"It seems that everyone is interested and committed to reach out to the grassroots, especially the younger generation who must be prepared to take over the reigns when the old guard steps down.

"All BN MPs, state assemblymen, and divisional and branch leaders must go down to the field and reach out to people of all races, listen to them and solve their problems," he added.

Mahathir said the BN supreme council will consider suggestions that the BN convention should be held for two days instead of one at present to allow more delegates to participate in the debate.

The delegates also contributed more than RM20,000 while the BN component parties collected RM140,000 for Universiti Malaya's Dewan Tunku Canselor Building Fund.

BN coalition will evolve into a single party as Malaysians unite, says Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat: Saying that a Malaysian race is already in place, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad foresees the Barisan Nasional (BN) shifting from a coalition to a single party.

However, the process will be slow and gradual, he added.

Speaking after the BN convention held here today, Mahathir said the existence of a single Malaysian race is already evident.

"We already have a Malaysian race. What we must do now is reach out to everyone and help reinforce the fact that we are one Malaysian race," he said, complimenting the various speakers' fluency in Bahasa Malaysia during the debate.

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Serve all races, says

SUN

'We should prove to them
BN's capability,
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PM

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad called on component parties of the Barisan Nasional to serve all Malaysians equally in order to face a changing political scenario in which people may no longer feel that the multiracial coalition is needed to continue governing the country.

"We can no longer use our past successes to convince people that they should elect us to rule this country and continue its development. Instead, we should prove to them our capability, power and ability to care for their future."

"We must plan a good approach to attract part of the new generation to continue supporting us, and if we do this sincerely, people will support us," he said when opening the BN Convention at the PWTC in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Mahathir, who is also the BN chairman, said the new generation no longer believed in cooperation among the various races. Their support for the BN has declined because they prioritise their own race and they feel their world is secure, peaceful and prosperous, he said.

"They feel they will always get paid well and that is why they don't need the politics of cooperation in the BN. This is the situation of the present society."

"To address this, the BN must have new approaches. We cannot use the present approach anymore. We cannot cooperate only during elections or certain events. Cooperation has to be at all times and at all levels, federal, state and branches," he added.

He said meetings must be held between all component parties. To this end, Mahathir said the BN supreme council will issue a guideline to component

party leaders outlining the role and functions they should play.

"Therefore, I call on all BN leaders, beginning from now, to close ranks and ensure that the BN functions more as one party rather than a coalition of parties."

"This is the approach we will take for the BN to handle the change in public sentiment where people do not feel any gratitude for past struggles," he said.

Elaborating further, Mahathir said there was talk that people are unhappy with the BN because some wakil rakyat only helped people of their own race, and failed to visit or attend functions hosted by other races in the constituency.

Stressing that it is an unhealthy practice in the present environment, he repeated his call for component parties to forge closer cooperation and better understanding of each others' problems.

"We don't always need to put our own race first. Instead, we should focus on a Malaysian race because BN is a Malaysian party."

"To get a better understanding, the component parties should meet more often instead of only once a year and at the state-level, they should meet between two and four times a year," he said.

Mahathir said the new approach must take into account the reality in the country where society has become bolder and does not prioritise national interests.

He said some are agents for foreigners. They go looking for foreign help and have no feelings of love for the country or patriotism.

"What they want is how to wrest power away for themselves, and this is the environment we are faced with today ... a more hostile environment which sees us as the enemies," he said.