

# BN parties to work as single entity

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Coalition to tackle problems faced by people as a team, says PM

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Sat:** All Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties will start working as a single entity, united with a common stand on national issues instead of addressing them individually.

Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said such cooperation is vital to face future social and economic challenges.

"Among other measures is to have regular BN supreme council meetings where the parties can discuss and exchange ideas to solve problems," he said.

He added that BN will also set up a headquarters soon in Kuala Lumpur with all the necessary facilities to foster closer ties among the component parties.

Mahathir said that before, the only time BN component parties came together as a single entity was during elections.

"That was the only time when we sit down to discuss as BN on the allocation of seats for candidates in various constituencies," he added.

Mahathir said it is better that all problems the people face be seen as a BN problem and not as a Umno, MIC, MCA or other component party's problems.

Speaking to reporters after chairing a three-hour BN supreme council meeting here today, Mahathir said it is now up to the component parties to

convince their members to accept the decision.

Mahathir admitted that not all component party members will agree with the idea.

He said: "There will always be some members who will not agree to the decision ... even within the party, like Umno there are differences of opinions among the members."

"What is important is that all BN component parties have agreed to what has been decided and will carry on with it," he said.

Asked if the move to work as a united front was related to the recent clashes in Old Klang Road, he replied: "We had actually planned to meet earlier to discuss the issue but since the BN meeting was

held today, this was also discussed," he said.

Mahathir also called on all BN elected representatives to visit their constituencies regularly and identify problems in their areas.

"Other than that, we also want them to look into the needs of the people living in the surrounding areas since many of these residents' problems have been overlooked."

Mahathir also announced that the BN will be holding its convention on July 7 where some 3,000 leaders from all levels are expected to attend. The motto this year is *BN, the Thrust of the Nation's Strength*.

In an immediate reaction, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the deci-

sion to act as a united front should foster the creation of a national agenda.

"We need to have the agenda to solve the people's problems by exchanging ideas and meeting often with all the BN component parties regularly as we are not doing so presently," he said.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said all BN elected representatives need to go down to the grassroots regularly instead of waiting for the people to approach them.

"The representatives should start paying attention to problems faced by all their constituents and address them as BN problems instead of referring to each as the respective component parties' problem."