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BN-Speech (Component)

BN NEEDS TO PLAN FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS, SAYS DR LING

KUALA LUMPUR, July 7 (Bernama) -- MCA President Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties should plan to face the challenges of the next 50 years.

He said this was necessary as BN would be able to bring more benefits and development to the country and people.

"The key to BN's success in the past has been its ability to make changes according to the times and requirements of the people," he said in his speech at the BN Convention at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

Dr Ling added MCA was also supportive of Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call for much closer cooperation among BN component parties.

He said right now cooperation within BN was more noticeable during the general election.

It was very important for BN leaders to interact at all levels and to exchange ideas, he said.

"BN should also act and function as an entity, have a common stand on all issues and solve problems not in the interest of the party but as a common BN agenda," Dr Ling said.

The President of the People's Progressive Party, Datuk M. Kayveas said BN should not treat lightly the use of Islam by PAS to spread its influence.

"If BN component parties think this is a political agenda which is not dangerous then the time will come when the people will have to choose between an Islamic government headed by an extreme group of Islamic political leaders or the BN government," he said.

Meanwhile, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik described the relationship between PAS and DAP as a "man-to-man relationship" as they could never tie the knot.

"PAS and DAP is not like the BN...it's like a relationship between a man with another man...they could not get married with each other," he said in his speech which drew laughter from the floor.

Referring to Dr Mahathir's opening speech at the convention earlier, Lim said the opposition pact was not only an imitation front but also a "barisan auta" (false front).

He said to face the onslaught of the challenges from PAS, BN ought to mobilise its machinery right down to the grassroots.

"The next time we visit a village, we should go together. Not only as Umno, MCA or MIC and Gerakan but together. Only then will we receive their support," he said.

MIC President Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu called for the setting up of a unit under the Prime Minister's Department to look into problems faced by the people and their welfare.

He said the unit should propose to the government ways to overcome a problem before the situation got out of control and to stop attempts by anybody to erode faith in the government.

"Our approach is to go back to the people and to be sensitive to their needs," he added.

Samy Vellu also said BN leaders should be accessible to the ordinary people by way of interaction and through direct contact.

He also questioned how the opposition could obtain permits for political gathering.

-- BERNAMA
SLR MAM DVS