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PM: Use of violence won't be condoned

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said Umno will ensure that the use of violence to gain power will not succeed.

He said Malaysia did not condone violence as the country had been attacked by terrorists even before independence.

"After the terrorists were defeated, we now face other types of terrorists that would like to try to seize power using violence. If there is no legitimate way to change the Government, the use of force might be resorted to.

"But in a democratic Malaysia voting is sufficient to bring down a Government and set up another. Even now we find how an Opposition party successfully took over two States," said Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman.

He said, therefore, there was no reason for unsatisfied quarters to use violence to achieve power in the country.

"But there are militant groups who claimed that democracy is not the Islamic way. If democracy is not the Islamic way, is terrorist action to seize power the Islamic way? Of course not. Islam does not like those who create chaos," Dr Mahathir said when opening Gerakan's 30th national delegates' conference at Dewan Wawasan at its headquarters.

He said Malaysia would remain democratic where people of various races had a right to determine who would administer the country.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians were mature and wise and knew how to choose a good Government.

He added that if people were angry at something and purposely rejected the good and picked a party that could not administer a country well, then the victims would be the people.

"Worse still is when they choose a party supported by militant groups who feel that democracy is not the system of Islam and they set up a Government made up of those who claim to be ulama and that only they can determine policies and laws.

"Here I would like to remind the DAP not to play with fire. Their friends do not believe in democracy. Democratic action will be destroyed if their friends were to rule.

"It is hoped that DAP's break with the 'false front' is not a stage play," the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir said the rapid development of the country was due to the co-operative effort of the BN that was nationalistic; willing to give and take; and co-operated with pragmatism.

He said the BN was a unique concept where the interests of all quarters were taken into account but who all made some sacrifice.

For example, Dr Mahathir said Chinese schools were allowed in Malaysia although their system and curriculum followed the national system.

"I wish to remind that there is no other country, except for China and Taiwan, that officially acknowledges the rights of people of Chinese origin as found in this country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there was no component party in the BN that tried to gain popularity by presenting itself as the champion of its race more than others.

Reiterating that the BN's success brought advancement to all, he said if component parties got in a race to be popular, the BN would be divided and

a divided BN would be weak and unable to develop the country.

"All of us will surely lose," Dr Mahathir said, urging all component parties to strengthen ties with each other and strive to ensure BN administration.

He said sometimes there was great competition within BN component parties to lead a party.

"Party leadership must change from time to time, but competition must be healthy without cracking the party," Dr Mahathir said, adding that members must close ranks after a contest.

"Remember that of importance is the party and not certain people."

The theme of the conference is Bangsa Malaysia, Generasi Wawasan.

Later at a Press conference, Dr Mahathir was asked about a suggestion by Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik that Umno took the lead in having multi-culturalism in parties.

Dr Mahathir said Umno had made the first move as the party had Thais, Christians and also Chinese in Umno Sabah.

"A Christian priest, John Ghani, has made a speech in Umno.

"So we are a little bit multi-cultural. But when you want to do something, you must lead and still have people following you. But if you lead too fast, you look behind and there is nobody following you. You may be very advanced but they are very backward for you," he said.

"It is not easy for people to forget their racial origin. Be patient," he said.

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