

25 JUL 2002

Mahathir-Blessings

BE GRATEFUL FOR GOOD FORTUNES, MALAYSIANS TOLD

JOHOR BAHRU, July 25 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Malaysians should be grateful for their good fortunes, love the country and give their support to strengthen the Barisan Nasional (BN) which has a good track record.

"We must preserve the nation's peace and stability, we must preserve the nation's prosperity...must preserve the good fortunes blessed upon us.

"And to preserve all these, there is no other way but to strengthen the Barisan Nasional. Ensure the BN's victory in the elections," he said when closing the Johor BN convention at the Johor Baharu City Council indoor stadium here.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said that Malaysia had provided much benefit to the various races in this blessed country which was regarded by the over two million foreigners seeking jobs here as "a land of hope to live their lives".

He said that there were great fortunes in Malaysia that foreigners were prepared to risk their lives to reach its shores.

"Surely Malaysians themselves cannot be ungrateful for such good fortunes, blessed in our own country...the country's our very own. That is why we should be grateful and thankful and we must strive to preserve the existing situation," he said.

Dr Mahathir also reminded the people to be wary of attempts by the opposition to cause rifts in the people's relationship with each other in the country and to create racial discord.

"They wish to see chaos happening in other countries to also occur in Malaysia...this is a dangerous tendency because without racial understanding, the country will be destroyed following the occurrences of racial riots and clashes," he said.

The prime minister said that the extremist group, at the recent by-elections, had tried to resort to violence and aggression to gain victory.

"They play with fire and one day they will get burnt," he said, adding that in the Pendang parliamentary and Anak Bukit state by-elections, the police had to deploy some 4,000 personnel equipped with batons as in Lunas previously violence had erupted.

But, Dr Mahathir said, this extremist group came in larger numbers and resorted to doing things like assaulting people and obstructing the Chinese and Indian voters from casting their ballots thinking that it would ensure their victory.

"I feared that when they started to resort to violence, the security forces would also have to use force to disperse them...but if the police were challenged, they would have to use weapons and should one of them be inadvertently killed, then there would have been chaos," he said.

He said that they would incite sentiments until there was chaos and Malaysia which was peaceful would no longer enjoy peace and harmony and instead there would be upheaval and instability.

This tendency to resort to violence in elections to gain victory was very dangerous, Dr Mahathir said, adding that they wanted the world to single out Malaysia as being undemocratic and depriving the opposition a chance to fight.

"This is untrue and we are not afraid because the country's fate is our own responsibility and it's not for outsiders like the Human Rights

Commission to determine how we run our country," he said.

The prime minister said that he was happy that the Johor BN had taken the initiative to organise the state-level convention for the first time, among others, to forge closer ties between the BN component parties and simultaneously frustrate attempts by the extremist group to segregate the various races.

He hoped that the rapport between the component parties was not confined to political activities and should be extended to sports activities like in football and badminton matches.

Dr Mahathir said that he wants to see, through the BN specifically, racial understanding further boosted and enhanced.

-- BERNAMA

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