

19 MAY 2002

Mahathir-BN

BN COMPONENTS ADVISED TO KEEP AWAY FROM ACTIVITIES THAT CAN HARM BN

SHAH ALAM, May 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today advised the Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties to distance themselves from actions that can harm their parties and weaken the coalition.

They should continue to consolidate their positions and cooperate for the good of the BN, the prime minister and BN chairman said.

"In the fight against the opposition, we can no longer afford to be defensive and should go on the offensive. The opposition parties have committed errors and their errors should be exposed at all times so that the people will know what they really are," he said.

He was speaking when opening the MIC general assembly at Bangunan Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, here. The ceremony was also attended by the majority of the BN component leaders.

He said that attempts by the opposition parties to copy the BN's approach had clearly failed because imitation goods had no quality and there was "no sincerity in their evil pact."

Dr Mahathir said it was the responsibility of the BN components to settle their own internal problems but the national leaders, upon realising that the weaknesses of each component could damage the BN, had to criticise and advise problem parties.

"Sometimes I give my views and advice when solicited but whether or not they are accepted is up to the parties concerned. This is our way in the BN and it lends strength to our alliance," he said.

He said the internal problems of BN components should be settled through compromise by all levels as well the party leadership.

"That's why the MIC is strong now and can concentrate fully on efforts to develop the Indians in the country and need not waste a lot of time settling internal problems," he said.

He said this was the attitude needed among the BN components and all internal problems, be they trivial or serious, should be settled amicably and wisely.

Dr Mahathir said the internal problems of BN component parties need not be blown up until they became known to the enemy and the talk of the town which would give a negative perception of the BN.

"The situation is aggravated when the feuding parties use the media to bad mouth each other until the party appears bad and rotten in the eyes of the public," he said.

Such a situation would surely affect the status, integrity and dignity of the BN, he added.

The prime minister also said that although the BN parties practised democracy, the propensity to jostle for high party posts would only ruin the parties.

"It's worse if they jostle for high posts because of power, revenge, hatred, malice, obsession with someone, opportunism, self-interest and money politics," he said.

He said this had happened to several BN components including Umno with the losers leaving the party and setting up their own parties to run down the original party and oppose the BN in every general election.

"They're not fighting for the party or its objectives but for self-interest," he said.

Another negative phenomenon among BN components was party-hopping which not only tarnished the party but also the credibility and dignity of the

member switching parties, Dr Mahathir said.

"So I call on all BN component party members to distance themselves from actions that can damage their own parties," he said.

-- BERNAMA

SR AT JK