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Mahathir-BN

BN HAS MANAGED RACIAL DIFFERENCES SUCCESSFULLY- DR M

JOHOR BA HARU, July 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said that the Barisan Nasional (BN) has successfully managed racial differences in Malaysia in its own unique way and thus the people do not need an alternative to protect them.

The BN Chairman said the component parties in the BN always moved together to develop the country, thus making the BN a coalition of integrity.

"In fact this has been a matter of pride throughout its long period since the time of the Alliance to the present, the coalition has moved together to bring development to this country," he said in his message on the occasion of the Johor BN Convention beginning tomorrow.

The BN Convention being held for the first time at state level will be attended by 400 delegates comprising 130 from Umno, 90 from the MCA, 70 (MIC), 60 (Gerakan) and 50 (PPP). There will also be observers from other BN component parties.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to close the two-day convention on Thursday at the Johor Baharu City Council Indoor Stadium while Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman will deliver the opening keynote address at Hotel Eden Garden tomorrow at 4pm.

Dr Mahathir said through close and solid cooperation within the BN, differences among the races from the aspect of religion and beliefs, customs and culture and language had been successfully managed.

He said the occasional conflicts that arose were eventually resolved amicably.

"The success in managing the differences has enabled us from the various races to sit at one table, share the prosperity and progress and thus the people do not need an alternative to protect them," the Prime Minister said.

Inviting the people to further nurture this close bond of unity in the interest of the future of the nation, he expressed confidence that the close cooperation would further enhance unity and the overall BN strength.

"I believe in this matter, Johor will be able to continue playing its role as the bulwark of the BN strength now and in the future," he said.

The Prime Minister commended the Johor BN for organising the convention which was in line with the BN effort to further strengthen collaboration among the component parties.

Meanwhile, Abdul Ghani who is Johor BN Chairman, in his message expressed the hope that the convention with the theme "Barisan Nasional Towards Malaysian Excellence" would reflect the close cooperation and unity among the BN component parties in championing the BN struggle.

"It will inspire us to remain united and work harder to meet future challenges including the general election in the near future," he said.

Nevertheless the election was not the only BN objective as what was more distinct was the ability of BN component parties representing the various races to sit at one table and plan the administration and development of the state and country, he said.

He said the unity preserved through the BN and the shared successes since independence had eliminated the foreign assumption that Malaysia would face problems managing a multiracial country.

The Menteri Besar thanked past and present BN leaders for laying a strong foundation of unity and the people especially those in Johor for

placing their confidence in the BN.

The Johor BN swept all 20 Parliament and the 40 state assembly seats in the last general election on Nov 29, 1999.

-- BERNAMA

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