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Dr Mahathir: Stand united or extremists will gain power

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned today that extremist groups would gain support by default if BN component parties failed to stand united with a resolve to lead Malaysia.

He said BN component parties should uphold the truth and make decisions that would benefit all races.

He warned that extremist groups would gain support if BN component parties and their leaders were weak and quarrelled among themselves.

"In a system of democracy, majority support determines who forms the government.

"Threats by extremist groups to reduce votes for the ruling party will be used repeatedly if they find that we easily bow to their threats," he said in his opening address at the People's Progressive Party's 49th annual general assembly today.

Pointing to the Government-initiated Vision School project where certain extremist groups had levelled unfounded allegations and tried to incite the people, Dr Mahathir said they continued to accuse the Government of trying to abolish national-type schools although the Vision School project was aimed at encouraging integration among the younger generation.

The Prime Minister said BN parties must be united so that they would not be influenced by extremist groups bent on thwarting Government efforts to promote close ties among the various races.

He told over 3,000 PPP delegates, members and observers attending the AGM that the Opposition would try to wrest power from the BN, even if it was through crude and undemocratic means.

"We have seen how this frustrated group cheated and manipulated the electoral roll to wrest power.

"We have to be cautious of their dirty tactics as these people are willing to do anything to serve their cause. When they cannot win in elections, there are also elements from the Opposition which would try to assume power through violence as planned by the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia and carried out by the Al-Maunah.

"The Government, however, will not be relaxed on this matter," Dr Mahathir warned.

On another note, Dr Mahathir said that although racial ties were generally good in Malaysia, there existed a gap among the younger generation in schools and institutions of higher learning.

At a Press conference later, he said apart from encouraging multi-racial clubs at universities, race-based clubs and groups should also be discouraged at schools and institutions of higher learning.

"The students (of different races) should also share the same dormitory," he said.

Also present were PPP president Datuk M. Kayveas, BN secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat and other BN component party leaders.

On PPP's request for State and parliamentary seats in the next general election, Dr Mahathir said the matter required deliberation among the 14 component parties.

Dr Mahathir was also asked if he was confident of the evolution towards the single identity of Malaysians as Bangsa Malaysia.

"Well, it will take time for people to forget that they are Indians, they are Chinese, they are Malays ...to think of themselves as Malaysians.

Then we will have to define who is a Malaysian."