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PM: BN helped build a better nation

JOHOR BARU, Tues. - The country would not have achieved progress if not for the Barisan Nasional Government's efforts involving all races to develop the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said this in his foreword in the souvenir programme for the two-day Johor BN Convention which starts at the Eden Garden Hotel tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir said the coalition has enabled the country's multi-racial society to build a better Malaysia.

He said no other entity had managed to emulate the successful and "unique" coalition which had grown from strength to strength over the years.

Dr Mahathir said the co-ordinated approach by all BN component parties had allowed for the relatively smooth development of the country.

"The close co-operation that we have has enabled us to successfully overcome the differences between the races such as religious beliefs, culture and language," said Dr Mahathir.

"The conflicts, which occasionally occur, were eventually settled in a proper manner.

"The success in managing our differences has enabled the country's different races to sit at the same table, share our achievements and prosperity, and at the same time make an alternative (to BN) for protection redundant.

"Let us therefore preserve our unity for the future of the country.

"For this, I am confident that Johor BN will continue to play its role as the party's vanguard for the near and future."

About 400 delegates from the various BN component parties in Johor are expected to attend the convention.

Umno will be represented by 130 delegates, MCA will have 90, MIC 70, Gerakan 60, and PPP 50.

The theme of the convention is "Barisan Nasional for the Excellence of the Malaysian Nation".

The convention will be opened tomorrow by Johor BN chairman Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman. It will be followed by speeches by the representatives of each component party.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to close the convention the following day at the Johor Baru City Council Indoor Stadium.

The convention is aimed at further closing the ranks of the BN component parties in the State and evaluating their performances, especially in relation to improving their services for the public.

BN Johor had successfully maintained its 100 per cent record in the 1999 General Election by winning all 20 Parliamentary seats and 40 State seats.

Ghani, in his foreword in the souvenir programme, said he hoped the members of the BN component parties would use the convention to reflect on the importance of the close co-operation they shared.