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BN pays tribute to Ling, welcomes new heads

KUALA LUMPUR: Barisan Nasional recorded its appreciation to former MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik for his contributions to the coalition.

It also welcomed MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and his deputy Datuk Chan Kong Choy to their first supreme council meeting at Menara Datuk Onn here yesterday.

The council also welcomed the members from the Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party.

Barisan chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the coalition was waiting for a decision from the Registrar of Societies (ROS) before making a decision on Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak which did not attend the meeting.

On the Sarawak National Party, which was deregistered by the ROS last November, Dr Mahathir said the council was still waiting for a final court decision before considering its application to rejoin the coalition.

Asked to describe the condition of the Barisan at this juncture, he said the coalition was stronger than during the 1999 general election since many of its problems had been solved.

"Things are getting better. We have solved many problems, and we think we can solve whatever problems that we may have with the component parties long before the election," Dr Mahathir said.

He added that Barisan was now well accepted by the people, who appreciated what the coalition government had done for the country.

On another matter, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia intends to raise funds for its projects.

"We will raise funds ... we will have to have some money ... we will raise it within the country as I keep on saying that we have the money (locally)," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is Finance Minister, said for example, the country has more than RM200bil in cash in the Employees Provident Fund and the EPF has to invest to get more returns.

"This is the cash the Government intends to utilise," he said.