

Dr M: BN is more multiracial
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By R. Sittamparam

KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad says Barisan Nasional (BN) is more multiracial than the so-called multiracial opposition parties.

"Although the BN component parties are race-based, BN is more multiracial than the opposition parties.

"The opposition parties like DAP and Pas are not multiracial. They are only interested in their own race.

"They will have a majority of one race and the others (races) are only window dressing.

"This is the same formula used by the PAP (People's Action Party) in Singapore, which is a Chinese party with a sprinkling of Indians and Malays for window dressing."

Speaking after autographing copies of his memoirs, A Doctor In The House, at the Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair here yesterday, Dr Mahathir said: "But the race-based parties like Umno, MCA and MIC are not truly racial because they have decided that they will work together in a multiracial coalition.

"So, they are much more multiracial in practical terms than the so-called multiracial parties like DAP and Pas in the Pakatan Rakyat, who are trying to work together. But we know they are not working together."

On the "1Melayu 1Bumi" call by a columnist in a local daily, Dr Mahathir said: "I am worried about this trend of Chinese together with Chinese and now a call for Malays (together with Malays).

"This is a multiracial country and we cannot have race divisions.

"For 50 years, this country has seen peace and stability, with all races agreeing to work together and share this country fairly with each other."

He said the so-called free speech and freedom had brought to the fore extremists who did not care for the country but only for themselves.

"I'm afraid many people have become attracted to them (extremists). Now you see in Sarawak the Chinese wanting to be very Chinese and not wanting to work with others.

"Now Malays have responded by proposing the same. I think this is bad for the country."

Dr Mahathir said the Chinese had previously strongly supported BN.

"It was their votes that gave me (and BN) the two-thirds majority in the 1999 general election.

"So it is not true to say that the Chinese will never support BN. There are things that need to be attended to.

"For example, the Chinese are orientated towards business and trade. So, they need to have opportunities for this.

"During the reign of the fifth prime minister, there were no projects at all and no opportunities for the Chinese, so they had to go abroad. They were not happy about that.

"By and large, the Chinese know they have developed very well and enriched themselves in this country.

"When I was small, the Chinese worked as rickshaw pullers, labourers and even night soil carriers. But I'm quite sure their children must have done well to become doctors, lawyers and engineers."

He said the Chinese knew that Malaysia was a land of opportunity for them, as illustrated by the classic story of the late Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong who came to Malaysia as a labourer at the age of 20 and built possibly the country's biggest business empire.

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