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MALAYSIA WILL NOT BECOME A REPUBLIC, SAYS MAHATHIR

Mahathir - Rulers

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 1 0⁰⁰ (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said criticisms leveled at the Malay rulers during the UMNO general assembly which ended today do not at all mean that Malaysia is to become a republic.

+What the delegates raised during the assembly are constructive criticisms to correct the situation before it is too late + he said. The criticisms were made because UMNO loved the **monarch**; he said when replying to matters raised during debate at the close of the assembly.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is UMNO president, hoped that rulers understood the matter as the party's intention was good adding that, + we don't want to be a republic. +

He said the criticisms had to be made before it was too later and at this point, the situation could still be rectified_ -- more

♥10/11/19-10MST

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"He said if the situation got out of hand and the people started to oppose the monarchy, criticisms would be useless then.

The Prime Minister hoped that the rulers would not take exception to the criticisms.

+They were just criticisms... sometimes we get a little bit rough, UMNO people are rough sometimes.

+But what is important is when something goes amiss, we have to point it out. We do it in good faith, + he said.

+UMNO has never wanted to turn the country into a republic... our constitution clearly says so... + he said.

The Prime Minister said the monarchy was important as without the Malay rulers there would be no Malay customs. -- more

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Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he had already conveyed the people's feelings about the **constitutional** monarchy issue to the Conference of Rulers.

He said he had explained to the rulers last year's UMNO general assembly resolution on the matter.

The Prime Minister said although there are laws which prohibit ridiculing of the rulers, points raised by the delegates were outside the interpretation of those rules.

Delegates debating various motions during the four-day assembly had generally called on the government to amend the Federal Constitution to curb rulers' involvement in the administration, politics and economy.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he had also told the Conference of Rulers that last year's UMNO general assembly resolution was also in the interests of the Malays.

He quoted the English proverb that +sometimes it's necessary to be cruel in order to be kind+.

Speaking to reporters later, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said: +We have not reached the stage to consider **amending** the Constitution (with regard to the position of the rulers)+. --- Bernama