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Mahathir-Umno

MAHATHIR SAYS PEOPLE ARE FREE TO INTERPRETE HIS STATEMENTS

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KEMAMAN, Aug. 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today anyone was free to make any kind of interpretation of his statements in the run-up to the Umno elections in November.

He said: "It is the right of the people in a free country to make any interpretation.

"When I say no they say it means yes and when I say yes they say it means no."

He was speaking at a press conference after opening the Pesama-MK Furniture Sdn.Bhd. furniture factory here.

Dr Mahathir was asked about the interpretations made about his statements and even his actions in view of the forthcoming party elections.

He said there was also the problem of the mass media slanting their reports. "Slant... that is the problem," he added but declined to say whether reports in the newspapers of late about the elections were distorted.

"I cannot say anything, the newspaper may hit at me next," he said. --

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Regarding the statement by Umno Deputy President Ghafar Baba reaffirming his intention to defend his party post, Dr Mahathir said he had nothing more to say about the matter.

"I did say that if it is possible... if it is not possible, what can be done?" he said in response to the question citing his statement that one of the two contenders for the post should withdraw.

Commenting on the circular issued by the Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid, he said many questions had been raised about the involvement of government officers in politics.

Ahmad Sarji was clarifying what was allowed or disallowed for government officers as well as reminding them of their responsibilities.

Dr Mahathir said, however, it was not an offence if government officers, including those in the Community Development Department (Kemas), clarified government policies in the interest of the government.

However, they could not, for instance, put forward to the people that certain candidates should be elected, he said in response to questions on the role of government officers, especially those from Kemas, in the Batu Palam by-election in Pahang. -- Bernama

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