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Mahathir-rallies

GOVT PREPARED TO REVIEW BAN ON PUBLIC RALLIES

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 16 (Bernama) -- The government is prepared to consider lifting the ban on public rallies before the next general election, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

However, he added, the lifting of the ban, imposed in 1969, would depend on what the police have to say.

"It will be left to those who maintain security ... they are wiser, and if they feel the ban can be lifted then they will make the decision," he said when replying to reporters' questions after opening a factory of Sapura-Nokia Telecommunications and Sapura Electronics Industries in Wangsa Maju, Setapak, here.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor said yesterday that the police were studying the possible impact on security and public order if public rallies are allowed once again. -- more

ES MGN

▼16/08/14-25MST

CNS1879

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Mahathir-rallies 2, Kuala Lumpur

Public rallies were banned by the government after the racial riots of May 13, 1969.

Asked whether the prevailing peace and stability in the country would allow for the ban to be lifted, Dr Mahathir said that would depend on the way a public rally was controlled.

"When there are too many people (in a public rally), sometimes it is difficult to control (the crowd). The organisers (of the gathering) must know how to control that many people," he said.

Asked whether he was in favour of a lifting of the ban, Dr Mahathir said: "I am open."

Asked about a statement by DAP secretary-general Encik Lim Kit Siang that he had written to the prime minister for an appointment to discuss the next general election, Dr Mahathir said: "I have replied his letter." -- more

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▼16/08/15-03MST

CNS1893

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Mahathir-rallies 3 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said Lim had wanted to discuss how to conduct a general election that was fair and clean.

He said he had written to Lim that the government always conducted such an election.

"We do not cheat in a general election ... for that matter, I myself have lost in an election," he said, adding that if there was any cheating, he should have won all the time.

Dr Mahathir said even opposition parties had the opportunity to win in a general election, adding that Kit Siang also wins "though I feel he should not".

"Such is democracy and the fairness of elections in Malaysia," he said.

Asked why he felt that Lim should not win, Dr Mahathir said the DAP leader had never made constructive suggestions in the Dewan Rakyat but only criticisms against people. -- Bernama

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