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Mahathir-ISA

ISA STILL NEEDED TO ENSURE PEACE, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 6 (Bernama) -- The Internal Security Act (ISA) is still needed to protect Malaysia from irresponsible groups bent on destroying the country, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The prime minister said the groups included those which triggered racial riots and staged general strikes as political weapons, a situation common in some countries.

"We don't want to see this happening because it affects the lives of ordinary people who are not involved in the matter.

"Therefore we still feel that we need to have the power to prevent irresponsible acts," he told reporters after launching the first tunnel construction of Projek Usahasama Transit Ringan Automatik Sdn Bhd, here.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayub's announcement yesterday that the amendments to the Act were almost completed and would be tabled in the dewan rakyat by the prime minister soon.

On Megat Junid's statement that the review of the act also included providing a flexible detention period, Dr Mahathir said he could not say anything on the matter yet.

"We will talk about this after everything is completed," he said.

Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang, in response to Megat Junid's statement, urged the government to repeal the act altogether.

The statement was "no great news" as the flexible detention period was already provided for under the present ISA, he said.

The Member of Parliament for Jelutong, Karpal Singh, said the act was no longer relevant as it was introduced to check the threat posed by members of the Malayan Communist Party, who had laid down their arms in 1989. -- Bernama