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Mahathir-Kelantan

LET THE PEOPLE CORRECT THE SITUATION IN KELANTAN, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, July 20 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the federal government will avoid intervening in the issue faced by the government in Kelantan but feels that the people in the state should be given a chance to put things right.

"As far as possible, we don't want to intervene. It's not our intention to grab power by using the powers of the federal government," the Prime Minister told reporters at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah International Airport in Subang upon arrival from an official visit to Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan tonight.

Dr Mahathir urged all parties including PAS, Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46) and Umno to think that the objective of democracy was not to give power to a government but to look after the wellbeing of the people.

"If they cannot bring any good to the people despite being the government, they should think about giving the people the opportunity to put things right," he added.

The Prime Minister hoped that the situation in Kelantan would not reach a point where there was chaos, forcing the federal government to intervene.

"The situation has not reached a stage where it has become dangerous. As such, it is better that we don't take action as suggested by some people that a state of emergency be declared so that we can take over the (Kelantan) government," said Dr Mahathir.

Commenting on the stripping of the portfolios of the four exco members from S46 by Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Haji Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, Dr Mahathir said the move should be accepted by the ruler as was done when the appointments were made.

Dr Mahathir stressed that Umno could not cooperate with PAS because the party was more interested in party politics rather than the wellbeing of the people in Kelantan and religion.

Commenting on the defection of a Kelantan assemblyman from S46 to PAS, he said it was not surprising as some people crossed to another party for self-interest.

Dr Mahathir said he was not certain that all S46 members would join Umno. "I think (S46 president) Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah himself knows that there are (S46) members who do not agree (about joining Umno)," he added.

The Prime Minister also reminded PAS that in the last general election the party was not elected based on PAS as an individual party but rather on the basis that it was part of the Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah (Angkatan).

"Now if Angkatan is disbanded, there is no longer cooperation, I feel it is better to ask whether the people of Kelantan still supports the party that contested under the Angkatan," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was not that he wanted the State Assembly to be dissolved but rather to leave the matter to the PAS leaders.

He said the issue on the status of the Kelantan government had nothing to do with the S46's intention to join Umno.

On his visits to the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan, Dr Mahathir said both countries indicated their desire to be friendly with Malaysia and hoped to attract investors from here to venture there.

He said the notion that former communist countries were less developed was not quite accurate because they showed advancement in certain aspects.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia and Kazakhstan agreed to form a joint committee t
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look into ways how Malaysia could assist Kazakhstan in constructing a new

capital at Akmoly, 1,000 km from the present capital city, Almaty.

He said four Kazakhstan officials followed the Prime Minister's entourage home today to study how Malaysia implements the construction of the new administrative centre at Putrajaya, near here,

After discussions with Dr Mahathir at Almaty last Thursday, Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev officially announced his country's intention to seek Malaysia's expertise in constructing the new capital at Akmoly. -- BERNAMA

AFY MAM AO