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Malaysia-Singapore

MAHATHIR SAYS SINGAPORE SHOULD CONSIDER SITUATION IN MALAYSIA

KUALA BERANG, Aug 19 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the possibility of Singapore rejoining Malaysia could not be rejected but the island state must first be prepared to take into account the situation in this country.

He said Singapore separated from Malaysia in 1965 because its leaders at that time refused to accept the situation existing in the federation which was formed in 1963.

"Factors such as the position of certain races in various aspects must be taken into account if the republic wants to return to Malaysia," he told a news conference at Lake Kenyir Golf Resort, 40km from here, today.

He was asked to comment on a statement by Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong yesterday on the possibility of the republic being forced to ask Malaysia to take it back, and on Malaysian terms, if Singapore's economic competitiveness were to falter.

Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew first raised the possibility of the island state rejoining Malaysia in answer to questions by journalists in June.

Dr Mahathir said the old stance adopted by Singapore to push for a "Malaysian Malaysia" is unacceptable in the context of the racial composition in Malaysia.

He said the problem of race existed everywhere including in Singapore itself where the Malays have been marginalised to the extent of having no opportunity to become a pilot as though they do not have the means and ability.

On Goh's reference to a possible re-merger on Malaysian terms, he said: "What are these Malaysian terms? We have to understand this before we can talk about the issue of re-merger."

Dr Mahathir said discussions on the matter might be held one day but it would depend on the "mood" at that time. -- BERNAMA

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