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Mahathir-Singapore

POSSIBILITY OF SINGAPORE REJOINING MALAYSIA NOT RULED OUT

KUALA LUMPUR, June 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad does not rule out the possibility of Singapore rejoining Malaysia one day as reflected by Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said Lee's projection might become a reality when all the races in Malaysia had developed self confidence and the capability to compete.

"When we have reached that stage then we will go back to the policy of meritocracy," he said when commenting on the scenario painted by Lee under which Singapore might rejoin Malaysia if certain conditions were right for it to do so. Dr Mahathir made the comment after visiting an exhibition on Potrait Painting by Li Zi Jian at Galeri Petronas, Kompleks Dayabumi, here today.

Lee, who was replying to a question whether he thought there was a possibility of Singapore rejoining Malaysia during a dinner organised by the Singapore Press Club last night, said it might happen when Malaysia adopted the policy of meritocracy without any race being in a priveleged position as was practised by the island republic.

It was also dependent upon Malaysia pursuing as successfully the same goals as Singapore to bring maximum economic benefit to its people, Lee added.

Dr Mahathir said even today Malaysia practised the policy of meritocracy but based on race just like in Singapore which practised meritocracy which was limited to its nationals only.

"Singapore will not be open to others who are not its nationals because of their capability, this is also true in Malaysia which has the same concept," he said.

Dr Mahathir said if Singapore considered itself as a meritocratic society, it should not limit the meritocracy to its nationals only but should also extend it to anyone with capability including in the political arena.

"Thus, we cannot say only one community is upholding meritocracy. All meritocracies are limited," stressed the Prime Minister.

When asked whether it was now time for Singapore to rejoin Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said it was not time yet but added that the time might come one day.

"We don't want anyone to dominate us just like Singapore which does not want to be dominated by others," he said.

When asked whether it (racial domination) could become a threat, Dr Mahathir said for the time being there were certain races in the country which still did not have the capability to compete on merit and it could still be debated.

He said there were Malaysians with capability who had returned from abroad because this country valued their capability.

Dr Mahathir said: "At the same time we must also maintain peace and harmony between the races."

"Thus, only Malaysian nationals can return to Malaysia, if we do not restrict this privelege to Malaysians, there will be many others who will want to come to Malaysia.

"Everyday I receive many applications for Malaysian citizenship from people like diplomats who have retired or businessmen including the 'white-skinned' who want to stay in Malaysia," he added.

Asked whether the scenario painted by Lee carried ulterior motive, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't question what is behind his thoughts, I prefer to stick to what is clear and take things at face value."

Asked whether it was fair for any country to impose conditions to join a particular body or rejoin the original federation, Dr Mahathir said: "It can state conditions, we too have conditions if it wants to rejoin. It has the right to impose conditions and we also have our own right to impose our conditions."

-- BERNAMA  
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