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Mahathir-Singapore

UMNO HURT BY S'PORE'S STATEMENT ON REJOINING M'SIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 6 (Bernama) -- Umno today hit out at Singapore for its statement on the possibility of the republic joining Malaysia, describing the statement as insincere.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it was made solely to use Malaysia to scare the Singapore Chinese for certain reasons.

He said Umno was unhappy and very sad with the statement and had to make this statement since the issue did not originate from Malaysia.

This is the stand taken by Umno Supreme Council (MT) which met here tonight, he told a news conference after the meeting.

Dr Mahathir also read the heading of Thursday's issue of the Singapore Straits Times on the possibility of Singapore rejoining Malaysia if the republic was weak. The statement is believed to be made by Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong.

Dr Mahathir said Umno felt that the statement was insincere, wanting only to show the bad side of Malaysia for not practising the meritocracy system.

"It (the statement) implied as though we do not have racial harmony and meritocracy, and that it happens only in Singapore," he said.

"All this while, we never question what is happening in Singapore which indeed did not practise the meritocracy system," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was Singapore which practised racial discrimination and if Singapore had adopted the meritocracy system as it claimed, certainly the Malays in the republic would be given opportunities to hold high positions in the armed forces, to hold weapons and become military pilots.

Asked whether Umno would express its displeasure to the Singapore government, Dr Mahathir said Umno would not do so.

He hoped the mass media would report the Umno's stand for Singapore's attention.

"Sometimes the newspapers think that this is not important. In fact, some Supreme Council members have complained that the media did not publish their comments on the statement," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there was no need for action on the part of the Malaysian Government over the Singapore's attitude, considering that the statement was directed at the Malays.

"As a party representing the Malays, it is sufficient that only Umno makes a statement on it," he said.

Asked whether he would meet his Singaporean counterpart to discuss the matter, Dr Mahathir said: "Why should I meet him as he did not see me when he made the statement." -- BERNAMA

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