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Mahathir-Singapore

GOVT WILL NOT STOP MALAYSIANS FROM WORKING IN SINGAPORE, SAYS DR M

KANGAR, March 15 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysians are free to work in any country including in Singapore if they feel they received lucrative salaries as compared to their own country.

As such, the Prime Minister said the government would not prevent Malaysians from working in Singapore.

"If they think they earn more income in Singapore, then its alright," he told a news conference at the end of his one-day working visit to Perlis today.

He said the government would not deter them from working in Singapore and similarly "we will not stop them if they want to come back."

Dr Mahathir said this when asked for his comments on the position of Malaysian workers in Singapore, a issue which crops up during occasional hiccups in relations between the governments of the two neighbouring countries.

On Thursday, Human Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek urged Malaysians working in Singapore to return to Malaysia as their contributions were not recognised by the republic.

He said they should not continue to work in Singapore merely for a slightly higher salary as compared to Malaysia when the republic's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew had humiliated Malaysia.

The former Singapore Prime Minister, in his sworn affidavit filed in a Singapore court against his political opponent Tang Liang Hong, had described Johor notorious for shootings, muggings and car-jackings.

The disparaging remarks angered Malaysians prompting the government to demand an official apology from Lee.

Lee had since apologised to the Malaysian government for his derogatory remarks.

When asked to comment on Lee's remarks, Dr Mahathir said he would not want to comment on the issue anymore.

"I don't want to talk on it anymore...I want to meet my ministers first," he said.

Asked on the people's view on the matter, the Prime Minister said, "we have read and heard about their feelings in the mass media. There is no need for a referendum on it."

Dr Mahathir said he had not been informed whether the Singapore government had replied to the "aide memoire" handed to Acting Singapore High Commissioner to Malaysia Vanu Gopalan Menon by Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi which contained Malaysia's official protest to Lee's offensive remarks.

"I don't know (whether they have replied). I have to wait for the Foreign Minister to inform me," he added. -- BERNAMA

MFJ TS