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Mahathir-Corruption

GRAFT:MAHATHIR SAYS NO WITCH-HUNT

KUALA LUMPUR, July 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government will not go on a witch-hunt in its fight against corruption but a "clean-up" will be carried out, if necessary.

"If it is necessary to clean up, we will clean up," he said.

The Prime Minister said the clean-up would be done only if there were evidences of wrong-doing.

"But, we are not going to go on a witch-hunt which is what the Opposition would like," he told a news conference at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport near here on his return from two months' vacation abroad.

Nonetheless the government will act against the people who commit wrong doing, said Dr Mahathir when asked to comment on the 16-point declaration adopted by last Saturday's multi-party meeting here called "Consensus Against Corruption" to address the scourge of corruption.

The joint declaration, among others, called on the government to set up an executive committee to review cases that have yet to be brought to court.

It also called on the government to ensure that the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) was empowered to order those suspected of corrupt practices to declare their assets.

Dr Mahathir said the government had acted against graft even long before the Opposition had pressed for action.

"There has been action taken even before they (pressed for it). Of course, they have been saying it (talking about corruption) all the time.

"But, we acted because we find it is necessary to act after getting enough evidence," he said.

However, Dr Mahathir said there was no need for the matter to be made into a political issue as in the case of the Opposition.

"The problem sometimes with the Opposition is that they want an opportunity to become popular and not to do good. In another words, they want to politicise the issue," he said.

"We are not politicising anything. We are trying to do something very good," the Prime Minister said.

As such, Dr Mahathir said there was no necessity to have a public meeting or demonstrations on corruption.

"What is needed is to seriously tackle the problem," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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