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Mahathir-Security/BM

DR MAHATHIR COMMENDED THE PROFESSIONALISM OF THE ARMED FORCES

ALOR SETAR, Dec 31 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today commended the country's armed forces for their professionalism in carrying out their duties.

He said that not all countries were fortunate like Malaysia which has armed forces carrying out their duties with full discipline.

Some countries have armed forces which were pro-government or inclined towards certain quarters like political parties to the extent that they could not carry out their duties properly and as such affect their countries' security, he said before breaking fast when army personnel at the Tok Jalai army camp in Kepala Batas, near here.

He said that the country would be chaotic and the well-being of the people would be threatened if the armed forces were to be on the side of certain quarters.

"If such a situation exists, the country will not be able to attain stability, cannot be developed and the economy will decline," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that certain quarters like foreign powers would also try to dominate the country if it was weak.

"We are aware that foreign military forces are more powerful than us...they can attack, even capture our country," he said.

The prime minister was however confident that the country's armed forces would be able to defend and protect the nation.

Dr Mahathir said he was grateful that Malaysia was not an Islamic nation which bows to foreign pressure.

It was because Malaysia did not seek help or protection from foreign military forces, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia had been able to develop the country through its own resources and initiatives without the influence or dictates of foreigners.

"We are still free and this is important for the sake of the dignity of our race and religion," he said.

The prime minister said that Malaysia was able to stand tall eventhough there had been foreign attempts to interfere in the economy and matters affecting the country, because of the disciplined armed forces.

"Having a disciplined armed forces, we could join together in facing economic challenges and defend the country's independence," he said.

Among those present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid and Sixth Brigade commander, Brig Jen Sulaiman Yusuf.

Dr Mahathir said that the professionalism and discipline of the country's armed forces had received the recognition not only within the country but also from abroad.

Speaking at a news conference later, the prime minister said that Malaysia was fortunate because eventhough there had been street demonstrations, the demonstrators did not really have strong grounds to protest.

"In other countries, there were street demonstrations because there was no food but in this country they have full stomachs," he said.

Commenting on the registration of the Social Justice Movement (Adil), he said that Adil should embark on welfare work as it was registered as a social organisation, instead of provoking people.

Asked to comment on the acquittal of former Selangor Menteri Besar Tan

Sri Muhammad Muhamad Taib, Dr Mahathir said that Muhammad could once again be active in politics because all this while he had only been on leave.

Muhammad, who is an Umno vice president, was found not guilty by the High Court of failing to declare properties belonging to him and his family under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1961.

"If he is not guilty how can we punish him. So, he can be active in politics one again," he said.

However, Dr Mahathir said that the Umno Supreme Council would have to hear Muhammad's explanation first as he only came to know of the court's decision only from press reports.

-- BERNAMA

JM RM