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Mahathir-Nuclear

MALAYSIA REGRETS PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR TEST

KOTA BAHARU, May 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the move by Pakistan to conduct nuclear tests is unhealthy and can lead to a world arms race.

"This is unhealthy...the world should initiate action and the most effective means to curb nuclear tests and attempts to develop nuclear weapons," he said.

"It looks as if the world is oblivious to this. They are more interested to make weapons and sell them," he told reporters after opening the Kelantan Multimedia, Telecommunications and Electronics Exposition (Emtek '98) in Tumpat near here.

Yesterday, Pakistan conducted five "successful" nuclear tests in Baluchistan near the Afghan border in response to the same number of tests by arch-rival India earlier this month.

The prime minister said that the Pakistani response, although warned against by the world earlier, was expected to happen.

"This is because when one party does something to show its superiority, the other party will also try to prove that it also has the capability and this leads to an arms race," he said.

In Kuala Lumpur, a Foreign Ministry statement said that Malaysia deplored Pakistan's underground nuclear tests and called on the country to cease immediately developing its capability to produce nuclear weapons.

It said that the action by Pakistan was a further setback to efforts to keep the region free of nuclear weapons and from threat of nuclear conflicts.

"Malaysia is deeply concerned over recent developments in the South Asian region which would lead to a dangerous competition for nuclear superiority," the statement said.

Malaysia urged all countries concerned to refrain from such a competition, exercise maximum restraint and prevent the further escalation of tension, it said.

The action by countries in the South Asian region to detonate nuclear devices had undermined the efforts of the international community towards attaining a complete ban on nuclear testing and achieving the goal of nuclear non-proliferation.

"Malaysia is particularly disappointed that nuclear tests continue to be conducted despite the overwhelming adoption of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)," it said.

Malaysia urged all nuclear weapons states to demonstrate a stronger commitment to the goals of nuclear disarmament and the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework.

Malaysia also called upon all states to actively participate in international efforts aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the realisation of a world free of nuclear weapons, it said.

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