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Mahathir-Singapore

PM REGRETS SINGAPORE'S TENDENCY TO RAISE OLD ISSUES

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he regrets the Singapore government's tendency to raise old issues that are sensitive to make the situation difficult between the two neighbours.

He said that Singapore is actually a country which only takes advantage of the weaknesses of its neighbours to prosper.

"Singapore has actually prospered by taking advantage of the weaknesses of its neighbours...(it) has no wish whatsoever to assist its neighbours and instead whatever businesses in Singapore, they flourished out of the weaknesses of its neighbours," he told reporters after visiting the Pantai hockey stadium here.

He was commenting on media reports on Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's memoirs serialised in the Singapore Straits Times yesterday, containing allegations against Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said that Singapore's tendency to take advantage of the weaknesses of its neighbours in whatever aspects was obvious, whether in politics or the economy.

"If we were to impose tax, Singapore will reduce tax so that all (businesses) will go to them...but we don't want to talk about this," he said.

The prime minister also said that Singapore was always making claims that Malaysia was unfair, envious of the republic and other things but Malaysia had to stand up for its rights and could also provide instances of their actions against the country.

On Lee's claim that Malaysia always use the water issue to cow Singapore, he said: "I cannot see how we can use the water issue when we have given our undertaking that we will always supply water to them," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was natural that the country would have to, from time to time, review the rates to be charged.

"From our calculation, we are supplying 80 gallons (360 litres) of water per day for one person and I am pretty sure they couldn't be using 80 gallons per day each...instead, what they do is sell the water for their benefit," he said.

"They buy 3 sen per 1,000 gallons of water and sell the water for S\$7 per tonne, and at an even higher price to ships," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that Singapore actually earns more from the sale of water than what the country gets.

He said that Malaysia had never indicated that water supply to the republic would be cut and instead an undertaking had been given that Malaysia would continue to supply water to the republic.

The prime minister also expressed regret over Singapore's action to make tension between the two countries worse by making allegations that racial riots in Singapore in 1964 was instigated by Malaysia.

"In actual fact, when Singapore was in Malaysia, they tried to raise racial issues through what was termed as Malaysian-Malaysia and it was a sensitive matter," he said.

They had then wanted to see the Chinese in Malaysia holding political power and they were angered when criticised and as such, the late Tunku Abdul Rahman felt that it would be best for Singapore not to be in Malaysia, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that Singapore was responsible for raising racial issues, causing the racial sentiments to result in the racial riots and the racial riots in Malaysia in 1969 when many died was triggered by Singapore.

He said that without Singapore being in Malaysia, racial problems had been overcome, up to now.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said that Umno would not send any protest memo over the allegations because he felt it would be useless as the other party concerned totally lacked any spirit of goodwill.

"What we can do is to also accuse them of having tried to create racial unrest because before Singapore joined Malaysia, the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians had worked together to secure independence," he said.

He said that when Singapore joined Malaysia, they raised racial sentiments and brought up the "Malaysian-Malaysia" issue and the situation became unstable and led to the eruption of the 1969 incident.

Commenting on the action of the Singapore media in publishing such allegations, Dr Mahathir said: "Singapore does not seem to be sensitive. I feel that if Singapore wants to make peace, they should not raise such old issues, it's no use."

By raising such issues, it would not help overcome problems and instead make the situation more difficult, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that under the present circumstances, if he were to ask Malaysians to be nice to Singaporeans, they would just refuse to do so.

"We can see their reaction during the Commonwealth Games (opening)...they gave such rousing applause to all the (participating) nations except Singapore," he said.

The prime minister felt that the ordinary Singaporeans have nothing against Malaysians but they were held back by their leaders.

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