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Mahathir-Islamic

DR M: GOVT WILL KEEP UP WITH ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES

PUTRAJAYA, Dec 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Barisan Nasional (BN) government would continue to adopt measures and rule the country according to Islamic principles.

"We've never breached Islamic principles, do things that are not against Islamic principles, and I would say that we would continue with that stand and we would not go against Islamic principles," he told a news conference after announcing his new cabinet at the Prime Minister's Department here.

He was asked whether the government would adopt a more Islamic approach in its administration following PAS' good showing in the Nov 29 general election.

Asked by a foreign journalist why he has not initiated political reforms when results of the election showed the people were demanding for reforms, Dr Mahathir said there has always been reforms in this government.

In fact, BN's performance this time was much better than many other elections, he said.

"If you care to look at, you will find that there were a lot of time when the people seem to be disillusioned with the government and after some time they come around to understand what the government is doing.

"Of course, we don't expect the foreign press ever to understand because you have your own agenda," he said.

To another question by the same journalist about political freedom in Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said there was clearly political freedom in the country otherwise the opposition would not have captured Terengganu from BN.

"They (the opposition) have been going around campaigning for the past three years. You must notice that yourself, of course you keep a blind eye on that. You don't want to see but the fact is that these people have been campaigning," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Opposition have used all kinds of dirty methods including trying to sabotage during nomination in the recent general election.

"When writing my name in the (nomination) form, somebody was bribed so as to put the wrong name, I nearly lost the election because the forms were not filled in properly," he said.

There were also people going around passing pamphlets and all kinds of things that were not true like accusing him of wanting to have relations with Israel, knowing fully well such things would be rejected by the people, he said.

"This country is much more free than any country in Europe. The campaigning is all year round. Immediately after this election, they are going to campaign.

"No other country have got that kind of campaigning and yet you say this country is not politically free. I think you have your eyes in the back of your head rather than on the front," he said.

On measures to mend the split among the Malays as evident from the election results, Dr Mahathir said the party would explain the true situation to the people.

"Some people are insisting we are telling lies, we are having a conspiracy to put down someone, some people just could not believe. So, people see pictures of the famous black eye and blame that on the government.

"We didn't do it, nobody said that we did it nor that I instructed people to hammer him, yet the government is being blamed," he said.

Dr Mahathir was confident the BN would win back Kelantan and Terengganu.

"This is not the first time Umno lost both to PAS, we lost to PAS in Terengganu once and in Kelantan, but we came back," he said.

He said the split in Umno in both states was not much of a split but was due to intra-party rivalries and loyalty to personalities rather than to the party.

"We know of several places where the operation rooms were closed completely," he said.

The party would not purge its members but would bring them around to understand that they have to be loyal to the party and not to individuals, he added.

-- BERNAMA

AFY TS