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Mahathir-Majority

I'M NOT TRYING TO FRIGHTEN PEOPLE - MAHATHIR

MELAKA, Aug 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has denied opposition claims that he is trying to frighten the people by saying that a weak government will bring about chaos and racial riots.

Reiterating the need for Barisan Nasional (BN) to win a two-thirds majority in the coming general election, the prime minister said his statement was factual.

"If I don't tell the people this, then I am not carrying out my responsibilities," he said at a "dinner with the people" here tonight.

Dr Mahathir said the BN government did not wish to abuse its power and had no plans of amending the federal constitution as alleged by the opposition.

The new government would have to be strong as it needed to take many actions that might not be popular, he said.

The prime minister said that if the people chose a weak government there was no guarantee of peace in the country.

He noted that the BN, along with the Alliance before 1974, had won all previous elections with a two-thirds majority except in 1969.

"We did not get two-thirds majority (in 1969) and there were riots.

"This is clear proof that if we chose a weak government the peace in the country is not assured," he told the 4,000 people attending the dinner.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman and Umno president, said: "That's why I'm saying over and over again that it's important for the people to choose a strong government."

He said winning more than two-thirds of the seats in the election would ensure that the BN government would not face any threat from others. It would also prevent chaos like the 1969 riots from taking place.

Dr Mahathir said a strong government could not be threatened and need not depend on popularity. Instead, it could give priority to its responsibilities and sensible thoughts on the country's future.

He said all governments would have to take some decisions that might not be popular, like imposing taxes.

A strong government, he said, would be bold enough to take such actions although not liked by some people.

Dr Mahathir also called on Malays not to destroy their culture through irresponsible actions.

"When the Malays lose their culture, then there are no more Malays," he said.

Saying that the general election would be held soon, Dr Mahathir urged the people to vote for the BN "because the BN represents all communities in this country"

Present at the dinner was his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

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