

16 JUL 2000

Mahathir-extremists

GOVT WILL KEEP EYES ON RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST AND RACIST GROUPS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUCHING, July 16 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said today the government will keep eyes on religious extremist and racist groups in the country.

"It has become a security issue and if left unchecked it can jeopardise national unity and prosperity," said the Prime Minister at an all-community luncheon in conjunction with his visit to the state.

Dr Mahathir, who is accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali during the three-day visit, said the government would not condone the use of religious or racial issues to divide the people who had been united since Independence under the Alliance government and now the Barisan Nasional (BN) government.

He said a certain group had been sowing seeds of hatred among the people against the government for quite sometime.

"This group hates the government so much that its members can no longer think straight," he said.

Fortunately, he said only a few were influenced by the group while the majority of the people preferred to live in peace and harmony and helping each other.

Dr Mahathir said the Al-Ma'unah group was an extremist group with a narrow interpretation of the teachings of Islam, so much so that they were willing to kill two security forces personnel just because they were a Hindu and a Christian.

"Islam doesn't tell Muslims to hate people of other religions, much less to kill them," he said.

He said that because of such narrow interpretation, they were willing to kill security forces personnel who had safeguarded the country's peace and security for the people, including the families of the extremists themselves.

"We shouldn't let tragedy passed by without a lesson learnt, that is an extreme action is a danger to national unity, peace and stability," he said.

On the other hand, he said Malaysians of various races, religions and cultures should exercise tolerance.

"This is the philosophy of the BN government and 14 BN component parties, working as one to develop the country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the BN provided a place for all communities to take part in the administration of the country.

"This way we are able to live in peace because to us all Malaysians have the same right in this country," he said.

He urged the people to remain united as this was the only way to bring development to the country and face threats including those from outside such as attack on the country's economy three years ago.

--BERNAMA

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