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Pramoedya-Mahathir

ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER MAHATHIR'S LEADERSHIP ASPIRED BY SUKARNO FOR
INDONESIA

KUALA LUMPUR, June 16 (Bernama) -- Economic and political independence enjoyed by Malaysia under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had been Sukarno's aspiration for Indonesia, said well-known Indonesian novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer.

He said that Sukarno had ambitions for Indonesia to be an independent and free nation and this had been achieved by Malaysia under the leadership of Dr Mahathir.

Indonesia, instead, had not shown any signs yet that this could be achieved, he said in an exclusive interview with RTM.

Pramoedya, speaking at his home in Desa Waringin Jaya, Bojong Gede, Bogor, told RTM's Yazid Naim that Indonesia had been reduced to a nation always begging for assistance from others.

He said that Malaysia had the political framework to be independent and he extended his congratulations to Malaysia for being able to overcome the economic crisis its own way.

Pramoedya said that efforts by Dr Mahathir to instil confidence among the people to be independent and not to be overly dependent on foreign powers could promote nationalism as they would be able to stand tall against the foreign powers.

"Nationalism will exist if there is a challenge. Without a challenge, naturally nationalism will wither," he said.

He agreed with Dr Mahathir that democracy had its shortcomings and should be practised by a country based on the local situation.

"Democracy has its own shortcomings. Western countries are generally democratic but outside their countries, they colonise, sucking (the blood) of labourers and farmers...that is why Sukarno rejected the Western form of democracy," he said.

He said that Sukarno adopted a guarded form of democracy during his rule because at that time, Indonesia was surrounded by Western nations and that form of democracy was practised to resist the Western powers.

But the situation then was extraordinary, he said.

Asked on his views regarding the future of Indonesia now faced with economic and political crisis, the novelist said that the republic was now at the early stages of a social revolution because the people, long oppressed, had begun to rise and revolt.

He could not envisage what would happen in Indonesia in the future.

Pramoedya however expressed his confidence that the younger generation of Indonesians could overcome all of Indonesia's problems.

"I believe in the young generation of Indonesians. Not only because they have succeeded to topple a dictator but also they are capable of overcoming all of Indonesia's problems.

"These are problems for the younger generation, not the older generation who are corrupt. I am proud of the young generation and there lies my hope. If not, what is there to look forward to in this life, there is nothing else," he said.

Pramoedya, 76, has authored some 30 novels including at least eight during his detention at Pulau Buru.

The novelist said that what was happening in Indonesia was the exact opposite of what he had wished for, to see Indonesia as an independent, democratic and modern nation.

"We are totally at the mercy of the world economy...not free.

Modern...not only not modern (but) getting more and more primitive. All issues are resolved by killings. Dorr...!! (gesturing a pistol in his hands)," he said.

He said that his works on struggles were dedicated to the young generation of Indonesians and believed that they would understand the practice of democracy for the future of the republic.

"Understand, but do not forget this world is not paradise. Everything has its opposite. There is good, there is bad and all have social functions, the good as well as the bad.

"Justice do exist in this world. Its social function is to challenge. Everything in the world has its social function. In paradise, everything is fantastic," he said, laughing.

-- BERNAMA

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