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Mahathir-Democracy

DEMOCRACY NEEDS TIME TO SUCCEED, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

By: Openg Onn

JAKARTA, May 31 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he is not advocating that democracy should be put in check but is stressing that it should be implemented cautiously to prevent any abuse of rights.

Referring to his earlier statement that Indonesia was facing problems now because democracy was implemented too swiftly in the republic, the prime minister said if the people did not understand the true concept of democracy, they would misuse the freedom to the extent of undermining the rights of others.

"Other parties may feel that they are losing out because the other side is exercising its democratic rights," he told a news conference at the end of the G15 Summit here today.

Asked on the inflammatory demonstrations seen in Indonesia in the course of exercising democratic rights, Dr Mahathir said it was up to the parties concerned to interpret them.

"Some people see it as a manifestation of their democratic rights while on the other hand, we also want to consider the rights of other people who want to do business, and their daily jobs," he said.

For them it was their democratic rights and as such the government had to weigh carefully between the rights of those who wanted to exercise democracy and those who were affected by that exercise, he said.

Asked on the free flow of information and the apparent contradiction on his view with regard to globalisation which he said had negative effects, the prime minister said there was no contradiction.

He said there should be an open flow of information but at the same time, the negative side of globalisation needed to be aired so that people knew that it was not that fantastic a proposition as it had harmful effects on developing countries.

"I think that kind of information must also be spread by the media," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Malaysian government did not suppress press freedom as publications like the Far Eastern Economic Review, Herald Tribune and Asian Wall Street Journal were available in the country.

-- BERNAMA

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