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Mahathir-Media

DR MAHATHIR BLASTS FOREIGN PRESS OVER UNFAIR REPORTS

KUALA LUMPUR, June 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today hit out at the foreign press for not presenting truthful facts about Malaysia.

He reminded the foreign press that they had a duty to their clients and people who read their reports as decisions were made based on these reports.

"And, when you tell them something that is not truthful, they (will) make wrong decisions and they (will) lose", he told a press conference after concluding the first day of the UMNO general assembly here.

Dr Mahathir was bombarded with a barrage of questions from the foreign press on the UMNO meeting, the opposition as well as his resignation.

Hitting out at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, he said the corporation cannot report the truth and doubted if he would be given a fair reporting, but he was sure that his facts would be twisted.

Voicing his disappointment over many foreign televisions, he said they were doing a disservice to their clients for not telling the truth.

"Tell them the truth. Tell them that Malaysia is a wonderful country, a peaceful one and a lot of people are making money here. Come to Malaysia and invest...visit Malaysia. Tell them the truth," he added.

He said when the press tells a lie, they (investors) would not come to Malaysia and would not invest, and they will lose money in the end.

Meanwhile, a foreign journalist asked the Prime Minister when he would be stepping down since he had been in power for 20 years.

Dr Mahathir said it would not be based solely on his decision or else he would have stepped down in 1998 if circumstances had allowed him to do so.

He said some people would like to see him disappear or disintegrate but others, somehow or rather insist that he should remain judging from the show of support which was evident during the debate today.

"Because of that, I have to find the right time to step down. I want to step down to please our foreign detractors (but) it's not easy to step down because you have a responsibility", he added.

On whether he would contest in the next general election, Dr Mahathir said "I don't know. I may be sick, I may fall down dead, I may be rejected by my party, I don't really know", he added.

To a question as to whether Tun Daim Zainuddin's departure from the political scene would see any changes to UMNO-linked companies such as United Engineers (M) Bhd (UEM) and Renong Bhd, he said, "I don't see them linked to UMNO, but UMNO has the right to buy shares like anybody else".

-- BERNAMA

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