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Mahathir-Peace

MAINTAINING PEACE AND UNITY MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT OF BN GOVT, SAYS PM

MELAKA, July 16 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said maintaining peace, harmony and racial unity in the country has been one of the major achievements of the Barisan Nasional (BN) government.

"This is Malaysia -- peaceful, prosperous, free, progressive. Opting for the BN is a wise choice because it (BN) offers freedom to the majority of the people in the country.

"I hope the people will maintain this tradition and culture. The democracy we practise does not deny the freedom and rights of the majority," he said in his speech at the "Dinner with the Prime Minister" at Dataran Sejarah in Air Keroh here tonight.

Among those present were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, former deputy prime minister Tun Abdul Ghafar Baba and Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam.

Dr Mahathir, who became prime minister on this day 20 years ago, said the racial unity in the country since independence enabled it to develop rapidly.

He said the unity was something special in Malaysia and should not be viewed lightly.

"We want peace. Perhaps we regard peace as something normal because since we became independent more than 43 years ago, there has been (racial) riots only once," he said referring to the May 13, 1969 incident.

Dr Mahathir said that unlike Malaysia, many countries with a multi-racial population had to cope with riots, killings and hatred among the people.

Dr Mahathir defended the government's recent action to detain certain people without trial, saying it was a preventive measure.

He said if these people were allowed to be free, they would create problems for other people including causing people to be killed.

"Priority is given to the peace, freedom and safety of the majority of the 22 million Malaysians," he said.

The Prime Minister said that while the government believed in democracy, it felt that there were certain limits to freedom.

"The government elected by the people has always been responsible in ensuring that the freedom, peace and security in the country is maintained," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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