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Mahathir-Sacrifices

PEOPLE MUST MAKE SACRIFICES FOR COUNTRY, SAYS DR M

SIK, Jan 26 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the people must be prepared to make sacrifices to defend the country although at times they might feel unhappy with the way the government treated them.

The prime minister said it was important for the people to develop a fighting spirit to defend and protect the country.

He said the government tried to provide the best service to all but there were times the people were dissatisfied and disappointed.

"What will happen to Malaysia if our people are not prepared to defend the country. Although we're dissatisfied for certain reasons, we must make sacrifices for the country's interests," he said when speaking at an Aidilfitri gathering with army personnel at the Gubir Camp here.

Present were Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain and Defence Forces' chief Jen Tan Sri Zahidi Zainuddin.

Dr Mahathir said the government appreciated the spirit shown by Malaysians who were prepared to join the armed forces and risk their lives although other sectors offered lucrative returns as compared to the military career.

He said such a spirit must be maintained forever so that the country's sovereignty and prosperity could be sustained.

"As the head of government, I'm thankful that our country can get many people to join the armed forces and they come forward voluntarily to join the force," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the armed forces played a big role in the country's national development and security.

He said history had proven that many big empires such as the Rome and Greek empires collapsed as they did not have the people to serve in the armed forces to the extent that military work had to be handed over TO hired soldiers.

Dr Mahathir was moved to tears when recounting the sacrifices made by the soldiers in defending the country from the communist terrorists as many of them were killed in the line of duty.

He said Malaysia was fortunate as the armed forces personnel were a disciplined lot and loyal to the country.

"We are grateful that members of the armed forces discharged their duties according to what had been determined by their superiors and they do not take sides as what was happening in certain countries," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said the move to send Malaysian peacekeepers under the United Nations peacekeeping mission to several countries was to gain the respect and recognition of the world on the capabilities of the Malaysian soldiers.

"By serving overseas, the world will know the efficiency and capabilities of our security forces," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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