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Mahathir-Laws

PREVENTIVE LAWS MEANT TO PREVENT CHAOS, SAYS PM

LUMUT, Aug 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that preventive laws like the Internal Security Act (ISA) are meant to prevent trouble and chaos that may retard the country's rapid development.

He said that the ISA was an example of such preventive laws, to prevent an undesirable situation from happening as a result of criminal actions to be committed like street demonstrations and "reformasi" activities.

Besides laws to punish offenders, he said, Malaysia also has preventive laws meant to safeguard the nation's security from being threatened by irresponsible elements.

"Some foreigners say that such preventive laws are unjust as an offence has not yet been committed, but if we were to wait until it is committed, not only will the people become victims, the problem may no longer be able to be curbed," he said at a gathering of officers and staff of the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) base here.

Dr Mahathir said that before anything untoward happens, the matter had to be dealt with and as such suspects were arrested to prevent them from carrying out their criminal activities.

"Many other developing countries cannot afford to carry out credible development because their people resort to riots and rebellion...large sums of money which should have been used for development are utilised for security in the country," he said.

The prime minister said that prevention was essential because to preserve peace and security, riots had to be prevented because if actions were taken after such incidents had occurred, they may not be effective.

"The ISA has to be used against those intending to create chaos and resort to violence in the country. The government has the evidence before taking action. Do we have to wait until peace is lost before we take action to curb (such actions)," he said.

He said that recently certain quarters who received military training abroad had returned to Malaysia to topple the government and it had to take early action to prevent problems.

"That is why our country is peaceful...in the absence of such laws, our country will not be peaceful. Some outsiders say that our country is not democratic because action is taken against certain people without trial under such laws.

"Even in Palestine there are preventive laws...to prevent attacks by Palestinians, Israel does not arrest the Palestinians but instead launch rocket attacks on people suspected of planning to attack them...even before these people commit any crimes or attacks," he said.

The prime minister said that in Malaysia, under the preventive laws, suspects were detained and they were allowed to meet their family members besides being provided sufficient food to eat.

"But Israel kills people they suspect to be planning to launch attacks against them and this is sanctioned by the most powerful government in the world," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysians should realise the importance of these preventive laws as these were the laws which contribute to the nation's peace and security.

"If not for these laws, we will not be able to have a comfortable life and enjoy the existing facilities.

"At present, there are many attempts to recolonise us even though not in the military aspect. They want to impoverish us through economic pressure...we should be prepared to face these threats," he said.

-- BERNAMA

KAY AR RM