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Parliament-Mahathir

PROMISES OF REWARDS IN THE HEREAFTER DIFFICULT TO CURB

KUALA LUMPUR, 23 Julai (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that promises of rewards in the hereafter is a form of corrupt practice which is difficult to eradicate.

He said those who woo support by making promises of "entering heaven" are not only involved in a corrupt practice but were also telling a big lie.

"To curb such form of corruption, only individuals and organisation can put a stop to it," he said in reply to a question from Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong) at the Dewan Rakyat here today.

Dr Mahathir said if one feared committing sins, that awareness itself was a good way to curb this corrupt practice.

He added that no effort has been made thus far to curb such promises of rewards in the hereafter and the practice was still widespread.

Tan asked the Prime Minister as to how successful he had been in curbing money politics and the most effective steps taken to root out the problem.

Dr Mahathir said to eradicate money offers was easier and laws have been implemented and action has been taken.

But, unfortunately for empty promises, he said steps that the government can take was restrictive and has had very little impact.

"As long as there are people who are not god fearing and continue to garner support by enticing people to believe in rewards in the hereafter, this corrupt practice will continue," he added.

The Prime Minister added that in politics, support must be given to those who are capable and can serve the country.

"But because those who are politically ambitious are not popular and do not have the capability to become party leaders, they make money offers or gifts or promises of rewards in the hereafter just to garner support," he added.

To an additional question from Tan who asked if the situation right now with Renong Bhd, Malaysia Airlines Bhd, Indah Water Consortium and the Bakun Hydroelectric project had anything to do with money politics or poor management, Dr Mahathir said money politics had nothing to do with them.

"These are conglomerates who have many employees. If the government does not take an interest in what is happening, then those on the losing end will be the employees and not the "towkays".

"There are groups which are very influenced by western thinking.. if there are weak companies, let them die a natural death even if it causes a lot of social problems and puts people out of jobs," he said, adding that the government knew that these people got the idea from the West.

The Prime Minister said companies faced problems not because they were inefficient but almost everybody encountered problems during the recession.

"I am sure if General Motors faced problems because of the depreciation of the US dollar by almost half, they too will face problems. Therefore nobody can say that the situation (with some big companies) was due to inefficiency," he added.

Meanwhile, Mohd Apandi Haji Muhamad (PAS-Jeli) asked the Prime Minister, who is also Umno President, as to why money politics in Umno was getting serious.

"In actual fact there are Umno leaders who have learnt from PAS to make promises of rewards in the hereafter and heaven to those who are not well

versed in religion. However, Umno members hesitate to use religion, therefore they use money."

"As for PAS, it uses promises of "entering heaven" because nobody knows if it is true or false ...as nobody has passed away and come back to tell the story," said Dr Mahathir, whose remark drew laughter from government supporters.

"When we live to oppose those who are involved in this kind of corrupt practice (promises of rewards in the hereafter), there will be those who will be influenced and who will try this kind of practice," he said.

However, the Prime Minister said Umno members no longer used such form of corrupt practice but offered money instead.

"If this is it, people will say if there is dirt around us, we will all become dirty," he said.

In reply to a question from Raja Datuk Ahmad Zainuddin Raja Omar (BN-Larut), the Prime Minister said the only way to weed out this form of corrupt practice was to inculcate strong religious belief and education.

He said strong faith can only come from those who have religious background.

"But there are political parties which influence teachers against conducting religious classes for children but instead teach them to draw a circle and paint it (circle) green," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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