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Mahathir-Decision

WHATEVER DECISIONS ARE IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, July 16 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today whatever decisions he has made during the past 20 years as prime minister have been for the good of the country.

He said he might have made some mistakes as well as decisions that were unpopular along the way.

"I think I may have made some mistakes, yes, but I cannot regret the decisions that I have made although they may be very unpopular and may have caused me to lose support.

"But I believe I made these things for the good of the country, not for my own good, because I'm going, anyway. I can't stay forever," he said at a news conference after presenting a keynote address at the Malaysian Electric Power Forum 2001, here.

Dr Mahathir was asked about his achievements and regrets on being Malaysia's prime minister for 20 years since July 16 1981.

He said the greatest achievement for Malaysia was to be able to maintain stability and relative racial harmony, unlike other multiracial countries.

He said: "If you look at other multiracial countries, you will know that very few have been able to achieve stability and many of them are unable to develop because of differences in the various races."

He said this was not the case for Malaysia where the people of various backgrounds could live, work and play together and were able to settle their differences around the table.

He hoped that Malaysia would continue to be stable and to grow rapidly.

"I hope that Malaysia will continue to be independent and not controlled by any party except Malaysians."

When asked how many more years he would remain as prime minister, Dr Mahathir said he hoped that he would be able to retire as soon as he was allowed to.

"At the moment, I'm not supposed to mention this thing. It has a very bad effect on the market, maybe the share prices might go up if I retire, I dont know, but they say it may go down," he said in jest.

-- BERNAMA

MAM ZS JK