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Mahathir-Violence

CHAOS MAY REIGN IF VIOLENT CAMPAIGNING IS ALLOWED, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

PASIR GUDANG, July 25 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed concern that chaos may reign during elections if the extremist and violent tactics of the opposition during campaigning are not tackled immediately.

The prime minister said that a study by the Umno supreme council on reports of violence during the Anak Bukit state and Pendang parliamentary by-elections had found that there were serious cases.

"If this trend (violent campaigning) continues, I fear that there'll be chaos every time there's a by-election or general election," he told reporters after visiting the Johor port, here.

Dr Mahatir said this when asked whether the Election Commission (EC) had powers to act against unethical campaigning.

"The EC has no enforcement powers now. It has no way of stopping violent acts. That's why we must determine the role played by the security bodies like the police," he said.

He said reports of violence by PAS were still coming in and Umno was studying all the reports for submission to the government.

Asked about the Barisan Nasional's (BN) ability to continue administering the country, Dr Mahatir said that till today it had been proven that the government led by the BN could lead the country well.

"The BN has the capacity to lead the country well, the others are only concerned for their own community ... and if they succeed, then of course the people of Malaysia will suffer," he said.

However, he said, there were still people in the country who did not want to see the Chinese and the Malays united and living in peace and instead wanted to see them fighting.

"There are some people who do not like to see Malays and Chinese close to each other ... particularly Malays should not be near Chinese school and Malay students and Chinese students should not stay in the same dormitory," he said.

Dr Mahathir said such a scenario would affect the country's security and cause disunity in the multiracial society.

"We must work together and realise that if we fight with each other over small issues, then gradually we will lose," he said.

-- BERNAMA

RAM JK