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Mahathir-Malaysians

MALAYSIANS' POSITIVE ATTITUDE CONTRIBUTES TO ITS DEVELOPMENT, SAYS PM

KUCHING, July 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the attitude of Malaysians who opt for peace and harmony by exercising tolerance instead of resorting to violence is a major factor which contributes to the development and progress of the multiracial country.

Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman, said that in some other multiracial or multi-ethnic countries, a clash could erupt over a slight misunderstanding or disagreement to the extent that there could be no development.

"Here, we discuss problems...we do not have a tendency towards violence like in some other multiracial or multi-ethnic countries (where) if they disagree, they'll not only say 'no' but likely to take out a knife to kill," he said when opening the general assembly of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) in Santubong near here.

About 1,200 delegates and observers from 62 party divisions are attending the two-day conference.

Dr Mahathir said that the people should nurture this positive attitude so that the country could continue to be developed and for them to remain safe and secure.

The prime minister also said that besides their positive attitude, he was thankful that the people had given their solid support to the BN as they wanted a strong government to rule the country.

"We need a strong government because we want a progressive country...bold in its actions and in making decisions for the good of the people even though the people may not be happy with some of the government's decisions," he said.

"If the government were to raise taxes for instance, the people will not be happy but taxes are vital to develop the country...a weak government will not dare act in such a way for fear of losing its power," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the people should understand that it was essential to choose a strong government and the fact the the BN had ruled the country since independence did not mean that democracy does not exist in the country.

"Democracy also means choosing a strong government...we should exercise democracy for our own benefit instead of being used in the name of democracy," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is stepping down next year, recorded his appreciation for past leaders like Datuk Onn Jaafar, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein and Tun Hussein Onn as because of them his task to develop the country up to the present level had been made much easier.

"I merely took over from them...to continue development on the strong foundation they have already set. I'm truly grateful," he said.

The prime minister said that Onn had been successful in uniting the Malays under Umno while Tunku Abdul Rahman had united the Chinese, Indians and Malays as well as the other races in Sarawak and Sabah under the BN.

"Under the BN founded by Tunku Abdul Rahman, all component parties, big and small, only have three representatives and they make representations for their respective races without the majority races dominating the minor races," he said.

Razak, said Dr Mahathir, initiated rural development programmes in the country and this continued under Hussein.

-- BERNAMA
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