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PM: We're not ashamed of ISA as it is effective for stability

Manan Osman

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia was not ashamed of the Internal Security Act (ISA) and will continue to maintain it as it is effective in preventing unrest and instability.

"I am not worried about what the West say as they do not like us. They always say nasty things about us.

"They call me a dictator ... the first elected dictator in the world. It's all right ... I have been elected again and again," he quipped.

He said with regard to the ISA, the West said that it was unfair and that one should not be arrested before he committed any crime.

"But that is what the United States is doing now," he said, adding the US Government had arrested several Muslims on mere suspicion and not under any particular law.

He said one should not be stopped only after he had committed a crime as it would already be too late by then.

"But here, we know these people are planning to do something that is wrong and will disrupt peace in our country and we have to detain such people.

"We don't detain people because they are politically opposed to us.

"Members of the Al-Maunah and militant groups, for instance, were detained as it was discovered that they were planning to bomb various places ... kill the leaders and all that ... and in fact had killed at least one person.

"We have to detain them because if we let them (go) free, they will do a lot of damage," he said during a dialogue with Malaysians at the International Convention Centre here yesterday.

He was asked whether the Government would review the ISA as it was heavily criticised by the West.

Dr Mahathir said the problem with the West was that they were of the opinion that Malaysia did not know anything about the rule of law.

He said they wanted everything to be done based on their orders and if the court ruled against their wishes, they would consider it a bad decision.

"Here the court is free and we have never questioned court decisions although they involved government politicians," he added.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir urged Malaysians living overseas to understand the rationale to introduce the teaching of Mathematics and Science in English and the Vision School concept despite opposition from various groups.