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Mahathir-Myanmar

MYANMAR SITUATION PLACES ASEAN IN DILEMMA, SAYS MAHATHIR

PUTRAJAYA, June 24 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the detention of Myanmar pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi by the Myanmar military regime has placed Asean in a dilemma.

In this respect, the Prime Minister hoped that Yangon would release Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, as soon as possible.

"I hope that the Myanmar regime will take into account the views expressed by other countries, especially Asean in this matter.

"Because this (the detention) has placed Asean in a dilemma," he told reporters when asked on the action of the Myanmar military junta which has placed Suu Kyi under detention since May 30 following a clash between her supporters and pro-government groups.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a media conference at his office here to announce a Cabinet reshuffle which, among others, the appointment of the new MCA deputy president, Datuk Chan Kong Choy, as Transport Minister to replace Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik.

Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Laos.

Dr Mahathir was also asked to comment on an article in the The Asian Wall Street Journal criticising him over his policy speech at the opening of the 54th annual general assembly last week when he related the tendency of Europeans to wage war and occupy other countries.

It also charged that Dr Mahathir was trying to seek popularity during his last days before stepping down in October.

"The Europeans must also accept that while they can be critical of others, others can be critical of them," he said, adding that what he mentioned in his speech was based on facts.

"There was no bias. We had to know who they are in order to deal with them," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that he did not need popularity now that he would be leaving the government in October.

"As far as I'm concerned, I'm on my way out.... Why should I care," he said.

On whether his remarks against the Europeans would affect foreign investments in Malaysia, Dr Mahathir believed that this would not be the case.

He said that foreign businessmen knew the country well and understood that his criticisms had been directed at the policies of some of their governments which were deemed detrimental to local interests.

-- BERNAMA

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