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Mahathir-NGO

NGO'S CAN CONTEST IF THEY REGISTER AS POLITICAL PARTIES- DR M

KOTA KINABALU, May 16 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said today Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have the right to contest in the election if they register as political parties.

Individuals who were members of NGOs also had the right to contest in the election in their capacity as individuals, he said.

"That is his right if he wants to contest," he told a news conference at Terminal Two of the Kota Kinabalu International Airport before leaving for Kuala Lumpur after a two-day visit to Sabah.

Dr Mahathir was asked comment on the Utusan Malaysia report today that NGOs which were registered under the Societies Act could contest in the election if they registered with the Election Commission.

Responding to a question if direct involvement of NGOs in the election would erode support for the Barisan Nasional (BN), Dr Mahathir said it was merely an assumption.

Dr Mahathir however said an NGO like Cuepacs, for instance, could not contest in its own capacity.

"If they say Cuepacs (can contest), cannotlah. But if individuals in Cuepacs want to contest, that is their right as individuals," he said.

On the next general election, the BN Chairman said it would be held when the time came.

Asked if it would be a good idea to have the National and Sabah elections simultaneously, Dr Mahathir said, "every idea has its good and bad aspects...we have to weigh them."

Asked to elaborate on his speech when performing the ground breaking ceremony for the Sabah Umno building when he spoke about the need to support each other in the elections, Dr Mahathir said it was necessary to reciprocate support.

Sabah must call for its 10th state election at the latest by April 12 next year while the general election is not due until November next year.

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