

(F)

169:

MAHATHIR 'R'R'R'

BY K. BALASUBRAMANIAM

SEGAMAT, MARCH 5 (BERNAMA)—THE NEW DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED, TONIGHT PLEDGED TO DO HIS BEST IN CARRYING OUT HIS DUTIES FOR THE BENEFIT AND PROGRESS OF THE NATION.

"I WILL CARRY OUT MY DUTIES TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY AND WILL TRY MY BEST NOT TO LET DOWN THE FAITH DATO' HUSSEIN ONN HAS IN ME," HE SAID.

DR. MAHATHIR, WHO ARRIVED HERE THIS MORNING ON A TWO-DAY VISIT, WAS SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AT THE REST-HOUSE HERE — ABOUT FIVE HOURS AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW CABINET BY DATO' HUSSEIN.

LOOKING CHEERFUL AND RELAXED, HE SAID: "I MYSELF WAS SURPRISED FOR I DID NOT KNOW OF THE APPOINTMENT UNTIL AFTER THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT BY DATO' HUSSEIN." — BERNAMA MORE HM 2310

(F)

170:

MAHATHIR 2 SEGAMAT 'R'R'R'

ASKED HOW HE FELT ON BEING APPOINTED DEPUTY PREMIER, DR. MAHATHIR SAID: "IT IS A SURPRISE — BUT I FEEL SO SAD THAT I HAVE TO BE APPOINTED DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AS A RESULT OF THE DEATH OF OUR BELOVED TUN ABDUL RAZAK."

ON THE CONTRIBUTION THAT WOULD BE EXPECTED OF HIM, HE SAID: "NATURALLY I HAVE IDEAS WHICH CAN BE CHANNELLED TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND WHICH CAN BE APPLIED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COUNTRY.

HE ADDED THAT THE APPOINTMENT WAS A SURPRISE BECAUSE DATO' HUSSEIN HAD NOT GIVEN ANY INDICATION OF HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE POST.

"WHEN DATO' HUSSEIN CALLED ENCIK GHAFAR BABA, TENGKU TAN SRI RAZALEIGH AND MYSELF (VICE-PRESIDENTS OF UMNO), HE ASKED US ABOUT OUR VIEWS ON THE CABINET RESHUFFLE.

"THOUGH WE GAVE OUR VIEWS THE PRIME MINISTER WAS FREE TO APPOINT HIS DEPUTY AS IT WAS HIS RIGHT," DR. MAHATHIR SAID.

—BERNAMA HM 2324