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MAHATHIR-BRIEFING *76* D

MALACCA, APRIL 9 (BERNAMA) -- THE MALACCA STATE GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED FOR ABOUT \$280 MILLION FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS UNDER THE THIRD MALAYSIA PLAN.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED TOLD REPORTERS HERE TODAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THIRD MALAYSIA PLAN AND ALL STATES WERE MAKING THEIR BIDS FOR FUNDS FOR DEVELOPMENT OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO DECIDE ON THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF FUNDS THAT COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE OVER THE PERIOD AND APPORTION OUT SUMS ACCORDING TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATES.

DR. MAHATHIR WHO IS ALSO THE EDUCATION MINISTER WAS SPEAKING AFTER ATTENDING A BRIEFING BY HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AT THE STATE OPERATIONS ROOM HERE.

HE STRESSED THAT IN THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR THE THIRD MALAYSIA PLAN, THE MORE ECONOMICALLY BACKWARD STATES LIKE KELANTAN, KEDAH, PERLIS AND TRENGGANU WOULD GET BETTER ALLOCATIONS.

DURING THE BRIEFING HE WAS TOLD OF MALACCA'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF ABOUT SEVEN PER CENT, THE PROBLEM OF LAND NOT BEING READILY AVAILABLE AND LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE. -- BERNAMA MORE 2057/A1

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DR. MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT MALACCA HAD MADE PROVISIONS FOR INDUSTRIAL AREAS BUT ONLY ONE-THIRD HAD BEEN TAKEN UP BY INVESTORS. HE STRESSED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A DRIVE TO ATTRACT MORE INVESTMENTS IN THE STATE.

HE ADDED THAT INVESTORS WERE QUITE HAPPY TO COME TO THIS COUNTRY WHICH IS STILL THE MOST STABLE COUNTRY IN THE REGION BY ANY MEASUREMENT. +

THE COUNTRY WAS GETTING OUT OF THE ECONOMIC RECESSION, BUSINESS WAS PICKING UP AND RUBBER AND PALM OIL WERE SELLING VERY WELL. -- BERNAMA 2058/A1