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ALOR STAR, AUG. 28 (BERNAMA) -- THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, TODAY PREDICTED THAT MALAYSIA WOULD HAVE A BRIGHTER ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH FOREIGN INVESTMENT WAS NOT VERY ENCOURAGING DUE TO THE PRESENT WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION.

MALAYSIA, HE SAID, RECORDED AN ALL-TIME HIGH TRADE SURPLUS OF \$1,537.1 MILLION IN THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR - 37 PERCENT HIGHER THAN THAT DURING THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD LAST YEAR.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR TOLD REPORTERS AT JITRA, 12 MILES FROM HERE, THAT ALTHOUGH THE SPEED OF PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THIRD MALAYSIA PLAN FOR THE FIRST YEAR WAS NOT VERY ENCOURAGING, IT NEVERTHELESS HAD ACHIEVED ITS TARGET.

IT HAD BEEN THE PRACTICE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE THAT ALL PROJECTS UNDER THE SECOND MALAYSIA PLAN WERE COMPLETED BEFORE PROJECTS UNDER THE THIRD MALAYSIA PLAN WERE LAUNCHED.

THE GOVERNMENT REALISED THAT THERE WOULD BE A SHORTFALL OF BETWEEN TEN TO 20 PERCENT IN THE WHOLE FIVE-YEAR-PLAN PROJECTS, HE SAID. -- BERNAMA MORE 1640/YF

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BUT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT KNOW HOW FAR THE SHORTFALL WOULD BE UNTIL THE MID-TERM REVIEW WAS CARRIED OUT AT THE END OF THE YEAR, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ADDED.

HE STRESSED THAT ON THE WHOLE, THE GOVERNMENT WAS SATISFIED WITH THE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE PAST.

HE HOPED IT WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO TO IMPROVE THE NATION'S ECONOMIC GROWTH IN FUTURE.

EARLIER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR CHAIRED A CLOSED-DOOR MEETING OF THE KUPANG PASU BARISAN NASIONAL COMMITTEE AT THE UMNO HOUSE IN JITRA. -- BERNAMA 1644/YF