

MAHATHIR

KUCHING, JAN. 23 (BERNAMA) -- DATO SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD HAS SPOKEN OF THE NEED FOR AN INTEGRATION OF OFFICERS BETWEEN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA, SARAWAK AND SABAH FOR THE SAKE OF NATIONAL UNITY.

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE PROCESS HAD BEEN GOING ON +FAR TOO SLOW+ IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE TWO EAST MALAYSIAN STATES HAD BEEN IN THE FEDERATION FOR THE PAST 15 YEARS.

SPEAKING AT AN AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE ON ARRIVAL FOR A ONE-DAY VISIT HERE HE ADDED THAT AT PRESENT THERE WERE VERY FEW OFFICERS FROM THE TWO STATES SERVING IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA, ALTHOUGH IT WAS QUITE ENCOURAGING, VICE VERSA.

+I WOULD LIKE TO SEE OFFICERS FROM HERE WORKING FOR EXAMPLE IN REMOTE AREAS OF PAHANG IN THE PENINSULAR,+ HE REITERATED.

DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR FELT THAT THE NEW SALARY STRUCTURE FOR THE CABINET COMMITTEE REPORT IN SARAWAK AND SABAH SHOULD BE HARMONISED WITH THAT OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA TO FACILITATE THE INTEGRATION PROCESS.

DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE, WILL HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SARAWAK AND SABAH GOVERNMENTS ON THE MATTER HERE. -- BERNAMA 1435/RH
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THREE OTHERS MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, TAN SRI TENGKU RAZALEIGH HAMZAH, (FINANCE MINISTER) THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND MANPOWER, DATUK LEE SAN CHOON AND LAND AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER, TAN SRI KADIR YUSOF ALSO ARRIVED IN THE SAME AIRCRAFT.

THE SABAH DELEGATION TO THE MEETING LED BY ACTING CHIEF MINISTER, DATUK JAMES ONGKILILI HAD ARRIVED IN THE STATE CAPITAL EARLIER.

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REPORT IN THE TWO STATES, DATO SERI DR. MAHATHIR, SAID THAT IT WOULD BE DONE AS SOON AS AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED WITH THE UNIONS.

HE ADDED THAT THE DELAY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REPORT IN SARAWAK AND SABAH WAS AT THE REQUEST OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE TWO STATES.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION, THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE SITING OF THE UREA PROJECT WAS SOMETHING THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION NOT ONLY LOCAL SENTIMENT BUT ALSO ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY. -- BERNAMA 1445/RH

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HE ADDED THAT WITH THE LONG PROJECT IN BINTULU AND OTHER FAVOURABLE FACTORS, THERE WAS A GOOD CHANCE FOR THE PROJECT TO BE SITED IN THE STATE.

FINANCE MINISTER TAN SRI RAZALEIGH HAMZAH WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE SAID THAT HIS MINISTRY WAS STILL STUDYING THE REQUEST BY THE SARAWAK GOVERNMENT TO ABOLISH EXPORT DUTIES OF CERTAIN PRODUCTS INCLUDING PEPPER AND PALM OIL.

DATUK PATINGGI HAJI ABDUL RAHMAN YAKUB AND DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTERS DATUK SIM KHENG HONG, DATUK ALFRED JAPU AND DATUK DUNSTAN ENDAWI, STATE CABINET MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS WERE AT THE AIRPORT TO WELCOME THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND HIS DELEGATION. -- BERNAMA 1510/RH