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PENANG, MAR. 5 (BERNAMA) -- DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK SRI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED SAID TODAY THE ECONOMIC PLIGHT OF BUMIPUTRAS IN PENANG WAS MORE THAN JUST A STATE PROBLEM - IT WAS ALSO A NATIONAL PROBLEM.

HE SAID THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO HAVE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE STATE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF PENANG ON WAYS OF OVERCOMING THE PROBLEM.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD PROVIDED ALLOCATIONS AND FACILITIES FOR BUMIPUTRAS IN PENANG BUT THEY MUST THEMSELVES BE READY AND EQUIPPED TO PUT THE OPPORTUNITIES TO GOOD USE.

SPEAKING AT A RALLY AT THE BANDARAYA STADIUM HERE, HE ALSO SAID THAT WITH PARTY SOLIDARITY, UMNO COULD FACE AND OVERCOME ANY CHALLENGE AND PROBLEM.

ABOUT 2,000 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE ASSEMBLY ORGANISED BY THE JELUTONG UMNO DIVISION TO MARK UMNO'S 32ND AND ITS THIRD ANNIVERSARIES. -- BERNAMA MORE 1525/SZ

MAHATHIR 2 PENANG

DATUK SRI DR. MAHATHIR SAID AS A PARTY REPRESENTING THE MALAYS UMNO DREW ITS STRENGTH FROM MALAY SOLIDARITY AND HAD SUCCEEDED IN COOPERATING WITH PARTIES REPRESENTING OTHER COMMUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY.

HE REFUTED ALLEGATIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS MORE CONCERNED WITH ECONOMIC THAN RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT.

HE SAID THE POLITICAL PARTY MAKING THESE ALLEGATIONS HAD ITSELF FAILED TO PROVIDE THE PEOPLE WITH MOSQUES FOR GREATER PROMOTION OF THE RELIGION.

ALSO PRESENT WERE HIS WIFE, DATIN SRI DR. SITI HASMAH, PENANG CHIEF MINISTER DR. LIM CHONG EU AND PUAN LIM AND REPRESENTATIVES OF COMPONENT PARTIES OF THE B.N. IN PENANG.