

NO62: (F)  
PARLIAMENT-MAHATHIR  
BM

KUALA LUMPUR, OCT. 13 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR TODAY REFUTED AN ALLEGATION THAT PERMISSION WAS NEEDED BEFORE THE NBI COULD CARRY OUT ITS INVESTIGATIONS ON POLITICIANS.

HE SAID THE NBI, WHICH ACTS INDEPENDENTLY, WAS FREE TO INVESTIGATE AND PROSECUTE ANYBODY SUSPECTED OF CORRUPTION.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO DISMISSED THE ALLEGATION THAT THE BUREAU WAS INEFFECTIVE AS IT ONLY CONCENTRATED ITS PROBES ON SMALL-SCALE GRAFTS.

HE SAID IF THIS WAS TRUE THEN NOBODY WOULD HAVE BEEN PROSECUTED FOR CORRUPTION INCLUDING THOSE INVOLVING MILLIONS OF RINGGIT.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MADE THE CLARIFICATION WHEN REPLYING TO QUESTIONS BY ENCIK LIM KIT SIANG (DAP-PETALING) AT THE DEWAN RAKYAT. -- BERNAMA MORE 1640/1B

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EARLIER, ENCIK LIM ALLEGED THAT CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC LIFE HAD BECOME MOST RAMPANT SINCE MERDEKA, 24 YEARS AGO.

HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO SET UP A ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY TO STUDY THE PROBLEM OF CORRUPTION AND RECOMMEND MEASURES TO COMBAT IT.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT IT WAS NOT TRUE THAT CORRUPTION WAS RIFE AND UNCURBED.

COMPARED WITH SEVERAL OTHER COUNTRIES WHERE CORRUPTION WAS OPENLY PRACTISED, THE SITUATION IN MALAYSIA WAS NOT THAT BAD, HE SAID.

+THOUGH WE ADMIT THAT CORRUPTION PREVAILS IN THE COUNTRY, BUT IT IS NOT OPENLY DONE AND THIS WITHOUT DOUBT IS ONE OF THE EFFECTS OF THE NBI ACTIVITIES. +-- BERNAMA MORE 11655/1B

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IN THIS CONTEXT, THE PROPOSED COMMISSION WOULD NOT BE AS EFFECTIVE AN ANTIDOTE TO PRODUCE THE DESIRED RESULTS, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID.

HE ADDED THAT POSITIVE STEPS HAD AND WERE BEING TAKEN TO ERADICATE CORRUPTION OR REDUCE IT TO THE MINIMUM.

SUCH MEASURES INCLUDED THE STRENGTHENING OF THE BUREAU BY INCREASING THE NUMBER OF ITS OFFICIALS, SECONDMENT OF OFFICIALS FROM OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND A MORE CONCERTED EFFORT ON PREVENTION.

TO A QUESTION BY ENCIK LIM CHO HOOK (DAP-IPOH), THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE SHORTAGE OF EXPERTS AND TRAINED PERSONNEL DID NOT POSE A MAJOR PROBLEM TO THE NBI.

WHAT WAS MORE IMPORTANT, HE ADDED, WAS THE AVAILABILITY OF HONEST AND DEDICATED OFFICIALS AND THIS HAD OCCASIONALLY DELAYED THE FILLING UP OF VACCANCIES IN THE NBI.

--BERNAMA 1710/AN