

NO42 (F)
MAHATHIR-OIL
BM

FROM MARIA SAMAD

SINGAPORE, JAN. 2³⁷ (BERNAMA) (P) - DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SUGGESTED TODAY THAT THE ASEAN COUNTRIES JOIN FORCES TO BREAK THE MONOPOLY IN THE OIL BUSINESS ENJOYED BY THE MULTINATIONAL OIL COMPANIES.

HE SAID THAT THE PRESENT COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO ASEAN PARTNERS IN THE OIL BUSINESS COULD FORM THE NUCLEUS FOR AN OIL INDUSTRY IN THE REGION.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THIS AFTER VISITING THE ROYAL MALAYSIAN NAVAL BASE AT WOODLAND HERE.

HE SAID THAT AT PRESENT THE OIL BUSINESS IN THE ASEAN COUNTRIES WAS STILL DOMINATED BY THE MULTINATIONAL OIL COMPANIES KNOWN AS THE +SEVEN SISTERS.+

WITH SUCH A MOVE, THE ASEAN COUNTRIES WOULD ALSO SURMOUNT THEIR PROBLEM OF THEIR SIZE WHICH ON THEIR OWN WOULD BE TOO SMALL TO COMPETE WITH THE MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES.--BERNAMA MORE 1605/HM.

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IN THIS REGARD, AND FOR A START, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SET ASIDE A 101-HECTARE (250-ACRE) SITE AT TANJUNG RUMANIA NEAR PENERANG IN JOHORE FOR BUILDING OIL RIGS BY A MALAYSIAN COMPANY, PROMET PTE LTD, WHICH WAS NOW LOCATED AT JURONG HERE.

HE SAID THE JOHORE GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE THE SITE.

IT WAS ALSO AIMED AT GETTING THE FIRM, WHICH HAS INDONESIAN AND SINGAPOREAN SHAREHOLDERS, TO INVEST IN MALAYSIA.--BERNAMA MORE 1607/HM

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THE COMPANY HAD A CAPITAL OF \$53 MILLION AND WAS EXPECTED TO INVEST \$200 TO \$250 MILLION IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

HE SAID THE TIME HAD COME FOR MALAYSIA TO HAVE ITS OWN OIL INDUSTRY BECAUSE +EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE OIL, WE DO NOT HAVE AN OIL INDUSTRY+.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT THOUGH SINGAPORE DID NOT HAVE ANY OIL WELLS, THAT COUNTRY HAD 10 OIL-BASED INDUSTRIES WHICH ACCOUNTED FOR FIVE PER CENT OF THE OIL RIG INDUSTRY IN THE WORLD.

ON MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE RELATIONS, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT THEY HAD BEEN GOOD SINCE THE THE PAST FEW YEARS.

HE SAID THEY WERE CONSTANTLY FINDING WAYS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION AND STRESSED THAT +WE CANNOT EXPECT SINGAPORE TO COOPERATE FOR THE GOOD OF MALAYSIA ALONE.+--BERNAMA MORE 1620/HM

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HE ALSO WARNED MALAYSIAN WORKERS NOT TO BE MISLED AND MADE USE OF BY A SMALL GROUP OF FOREIGN WORKERS WORKING IN MALAYSIA WHO WERE OUT TO SABOTAGE THE NATION'S INDUSTRIES.

HE SAID THAT IF THE MALAYSIAN WORKERS WERE WILLING TO BE MADE USE OF FOR THEIR OWN SHORT-TERM GAINS, THEN THEY HAD ONLY THEMSELVES TO BLAME.

+I HAVE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS CRITICISED THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNIONS WHICH DID NOT WISH TO HELP US BUT INSTEAD WERE OUT TO COMPETE WITH US.+

+HOWEVER THE PROBLEM IS THAT OUR OWN WORKERS COULD NOT BE BOTHERED BY SUCH ACTIONS BECAUSE OF THEIR WISH TO FOR IMMEDIATE BENEFITS,+ HE SAID.

EARLIER, HE TOOK THE SALUTE AT A PARADE BY 53 MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL MALAYSIAN NAVY BEFORE ATTENDING A BRIEFING BY KAPT. RAMLI SANGIS.

THE PRIME MINISTER IS ON A THREE-DAY UNOFFICIAL VISIT TO SINGAPORE.-BERNAMA 1645/HM