

N144: (F)  
MAHATHIR-ELECTIONS

82 (P)  
KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 21 (BERNAMA) — ~~DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR'S~~  
ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE DATE OF DISSOLUTION OF THE DEWAN RAKYAT TODAY  
WAS ANTICIPATED AND SHOULD NOT COME AS A SURPRISE IN VIEW OF THE  
RIFE SPECULATION IN THE NEWSPAPERS THAT THE GENERAL ELECTION IS  
DRAWING NEAR.

BUT A REPORTER COVERING HIS PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE ANNOUNCE-  
MENT TODAY CHOSE TO ASK THE PRIME MINISTER ON WHY IT WAS ANNOUNCED  
SO EARLY.

TO THIS THE PRIME MINISTER REPLIED: +OH, I AM FORCED TO AS THE  
PRESS SEEMS SO EAGER TO KNOW, SO MUCH SO THEY KEEP HOUNDING ME  
WHEREEVER I GO.

+BUT NOW THAT I HAVE MADE THE ANNOUNCEMENT, YOU TURN AROUND  
AND ASK ME WHY THE DATE OF THE DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT IS ANNOUN-  
CED EARLIER THAN EXPECTED.

+IT'S NOT STRANGE, WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD TO ANNOUNCE EARLIER....  
NOW THAT ALL THE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS ARE READY.+

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ADDED THAT HE ALSO HAD TO GIVE AMPLE  
TIME FOR THE OPPOSITION PARTIES TO PREPARE +FOR THEIR FINAL DAYS.+  
— BERNAMA MORE 2219/ZCM

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MAHATHIR-ELECTIONS 2 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID IT WAS ONLY RIGHT THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE TODAY  
TO PREVENT +LEAKAGES+ IN VIEW OF THE MEETING THAT HAD BEEN HELD  
WITH THE BARISAN NASIONAL COMPONENT PARTIES.

+WE CAN KEEP EVERYTHING SHUT BUT WE CAN'T KEEP PEOPLE FROM  
TALKING.+ — BERNAMA 2220/ZCM