

MAHATHIR

BM

EMBARGO: FOR AUTOMATIC RELEASE AFTER 9 P.M. TODAY, MARCH 30

82
KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 30 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY HE DECIDED TO HAVE THE GENERAL ELECTION EARLY TO ENABLE ATTENTION TO BE FULLY DEVOTED TO THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME THAT HE HAS LAID OUT.

TO DO THIS, HE WANTED A FRESH MANDATE FROM THE PEOPLE, HE ADDED IN THE +HALEHWAL SEMASA+ PROGRAMME SHOWN NATION-WIDE OVER TELEVISION MALAYSIA TONIGHT.

HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE HAD ASKED FOR A +GRACE PERIOD+ OF A YEAR TO PUT HIS ADMINISTRATION IN ORDER WHEN HE FIRST ASSUMED THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP LAST YEAR, HE NOW FELT THAT A YEAR'S WAIT WOULD BE TOO LONG FOR IMPLEMENTING HIS PROGRAMME.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN VIEW OF THE COMING FASTING MONTH AND OTHER CELEBRATIONS, APRIL WAS THE BEST TIME IN WHICH TO HAVE THE GENERAL ELECTION.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO EMPHASISED THAT RAPID DEVELOPMENT COULD ONLY BE ACHIEVED WITH A CHANGE OF ATTITUDE AMONG THE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THEIR OUTLOOK TOWARDS WORK. -- BERNAMA MORE 2050/AI

MAHATHIR 2 KUALA LUMPUR (EMBARGO)

IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT HE UNDERTOOK THE STEP TO SHIFT THE NATION'S FOCUS FROM THE WEST TO THE EAST.

THE COUNTRY AT PRESENT WAS BIASED TOO HEAVILY TO THE WEST, AS CLEARLY EXEMPLIFIED BY THE LARGE NUMBER OF MALAYSIANS GOING WEST RATHER THAN EAST FOR STUDIES.

MALAYSIA HAS 49,000 STUDENTS IN EUROPE COMPARED WITH 200 IN JAPAN, 150 IN THE PHILIPPINES AND NONE IN SOUTH KOREA.

HE SAID MALAYSIAN STUDENTS NOT ONLY GAINED KNOWLEDGE IN CENTRES OF LEARNING IN WESTERN COUNTRIES BUT ALSO VALUES OF WESTERN LIFE WITH ITS INCLINATION TOWARDS HEDONISM.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID WESTERN COUNTRIES WERE AT ONE TIME ABLE TO ACHIEVE RAPID DEVELOPMENT AND DOMINATE THE WHOLE WORLD BUT THE PICTURE HAD NOW CHANGED.

NOW, IT WAS THE EASTERN COUNTRIES THAT WERE COMING TO THE FORE TO COMPETE WITH WESTERN NATIONS. --BERNAMA MORE --2115/OM

MAHATHIR 3 KUALA LUMPUR

HOWEVER, IN PURSUING PROGRESS, THE EASTERN COUNTRIES HAD NOT ABANDONED THEIR ORIGINAL VALUES, ESPECIALLY THOSE EMPHASISING ON QUALITIES OF BEING HARDWORKING, LOYAL AND UNSELFISH.

BY LOOKING EAST, MALAYSIA COULD LEARN FROM THE VALUES AND WISDOM OF THESE COUNTRIES, HE ADDED.

ASSIMILATION OF EVEN HALF OF THEIR ATTITUDES AND ETHICS WOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR CAUTIONED HOWEVER, THAT THE PROCESS OF CHANGE WOULD TAKE TIME AND THAT, SUCCESS WOULD BE ACHIEVED ONLY WITH FULL AWAKENING TO THE WORTH OF THE WORK ETHICS OF THE EAST.

ACCORDING TO HIM, THE COUNTRY HAD TAKEN THE INITIAL STEP TOWARDS ABSORBING THE WORK ETHICS.

+WE WILL INCULCATE THESE VALUES IN OUR WORKERS AND CHILDREN LITTLE BY LITTLE,+ HE ADDED.

ON DEVELOPMENT, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT FAR FROM OPPOSING DEVELOPMENT, ISLAM WAS ALL FOR PROGRESS. --BERNAMA MORE--2210
OM

N141: (F)

MAHATHIR 4 KUALA LUMPUR

HISTORY HAD SHOWN THAT AT ONE TIME, ISLAMIC COUNTRIES HAD PROGRESSED AHEAD OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

HE SAID ISLAMIC COUNTRIES MUST ARM THEMSELVES WITH PROGRESS AND KNOWLEDGE IN ORDER TO BETTER SAFEGUARD THE RELIGION AND THEIR SOVEREIGNTY.

HE ALSO SAID THAT WOMEN HAD THEIR PLACE IN A COUNTRY WHICH WAS DEVELOPING ACCORDING TO ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES, REMINDING THAT IN ISLAMIC HISTORY, WOMEN HAD TAKEN THEIR PLACES ALONGSIDE THE MEN IN WARS.

ON FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ASSURED THAT THE TEMPO OF RAPID DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE MAINTAINED DESPITE PROJECTED EXHAUSTION OF OIL RESOURCES IN 40 YEARS' TIME.

THIS WAS BECAUSE OIL REVENUE WAS PLOUGHED BACK IN THE FORM OF INVESTMENTS IN OTHER INDUSTRIES INCLUDING HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND INDUSTRIES UTILISING THE NATION'S RAW MATERIALS. -- BERNAMA MORE
2213/AI

N142: (F)
MAHATHIR 5 KUALA LUMPUR

MALAYSIA'S PETRO-RINGGIT WERE NOT BEING USED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF IMPRESSIVE EDIFICES OR MONUMENTS, HE SAID.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN STEPS TO DIVERSIFY THE NATIONAL ECONOMY AND DEPLETION OF THE COUNTRY'S OIL RESOURCES SHOULD NOT CAUSE ANY WORRY.

ON MALAYSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT IT SHOULD BE FORMULATED TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THIS COUNTRY AND NOT OTHER COUNTRIES.

HE DISMISSED SUGGESTIONS OF HAVING A PENCHANT FOR TAKING UNPOPULAR MEASURES THAT COULD JEOPARDISE HIS POSITION, SAYING THAT HE TOOK THE ISSUE OF POPULARITY SERIOUSLY.

A MEASURE THAT MIGHT NOT PROVE POPULAR WITH SOME PEOPLE MIGHT BE POPULAR WITH OTHERS; FOR EXAMPLE, THE DIRECTIVE TO GOVERNMENT OFFICERS TO +COME EARLY AND LEAVE LATE,+ HE SAID. --
BERNAMA MORE 2218/AI

N143: (F)
MAHATHIR 6 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT LIKE FORMER PRIME MINISTERS TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN, THE LATE TUN ABDUL RAZAK AND TUN HUSSEIN ONN, HE TOO SOUGHT POPULARITY BUT THE APPROACH TAKEN DIFFERED.

MEMBERS OF THE PANEL IN THE PROGRAMME CHAIRED BY ENCIK JAAFAR KAMIN OF RTM WERE ENCIK KUAH GUAN OO FROM BERNAMA, CIK ADIBAH AMIN FROM THE NEW STRAITS TIMES GROUP AND ENCIK ZAINAL FAKIR FROM THE UTUSAN MELAYU GROUP. -- BERNAMA 2220/AI