

BY REJAL ARBEE AND A. RAHMAN SULAIMAN

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KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 15 (BERNAMA) - (DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD DOES NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF MALAYSIA ADOPTING AN ISLAMIC RULE AND ASSURES THE PEOPLE NOT TO BE UNDULY WORRIED OVER IT.

HE SAYS AS IT IS NOW, ASPECTS OF ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF JUSTICE HAVE ALREADY BEEN FOUND IN THE COUNTRY'S COMMON LAW.

+IN FACT WE HAVE ALREADY ADOPTED THE PERSONAL RULES. THE ISLAMIC LAW IS THE PERSONAL LAW OF THE MUSLIMS,+ HE SAID IN AN SPECIAL INTERVIEW ON THE OCCASION OF HIS FIRST ANNIVERSARY IN OFFICE TOMORROW.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID MANY PEOPLE WERE WORRIED ABOUT THIS POSSIBILITY DUE TO THE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING ON ISLAM.

+THEY SEE SOME EXTREMIST PRACTICES ELSEWHERE AND THEY THINK THAT'S WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO HERE.

+WE HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY REASONABLE IN THIS COUNTRY. WE HAVE NOT TRIED TO FORCE THE NON-MUSLIMS TO ACCEPT ANYTHING THAT IS AGAINST THEIR CONSCIENCE.

+WE DON'T WANT TO IMPOSE OUR WILL. THAT'S NOT THE PROPER THING TO DO BUT THERE MAY BE A TIME WHEN EVERYBODY ACCEPTS ISLAM AND THEN OF COURSE AT THAT TIME THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM,+ HE SAID. -

MORE 1140/BW

MAHATHIR - ISLAM 2 KUALA LUMPUR

ASKED ABOUT THE THINKING OF HIS CABINET ON THIS NOTION, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THEY DID NOT SEEM TO WORRY ABOUT IT.

+THEY NEVER RAISED THE MATTER AT ALL. THEY KNOW THAT WHAT WE ARE PRACTISING IN THIS COUNTRY IS TOTALLY COMPATIBLE WITH THEIR OWN CONCEPT OF JUSTICE AND WITH THE ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF JUSTICE.

+ONLY WHERE THE LAWS ARE ENTIRELY AGAINST THE ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF JUSTICE WOULD BE GIVE A RE-THINKING.

+BUT AS FAR AS I CAN SEE, CRIMINALS ARE PUNISHED IN ISLAM AND THEY ARE PUNISHED IN ANY OTHER SYSTEM,+ HE OBSERVED.

AN INTERVIEWER ASKED WHETHER ISLAMIC RULE MEANT GETTING DOWN TO LITERAL THINGS AS CHOPPING THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO STOLE AND THE LIKE, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR POINTED OUT THAT NOT MANY MUSLIM COUNTRIES PRACTISED THAT.

THIS WAS PARTICULARLY SO BECAUSE IT WAS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE THE CONDITIONS PERMITTED FOR SUCH A CONVICTION.

+IN FACT IF WE HAVE ISLAMIC LAW IN THIS COUNTRY, WE WILL BECOME SO LENIENT THAT PEOPLE MAY RESORT TO STEALING.

+THIS IS BECAUSE IT REQUIRES FOUR GOOD MUSLIMS AS WITNESSES TO CONVICT A PERSON,+ HE EXPLAINED. - MORE 1140/BW

EARLIER, ASKED FOR HIS OPINION ON THE FUTURE ROLE OF ISLAM IN THE COUNTRY, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID ISLAM WOULD SERVE AS A STRONG STABILISING FACTOR FOR THE NATION IN THE FUTURE.

+IT WILL ANCHOR US SOLIDLY TO THE GROUND. IF WE FOLLOW THE TEACHING OF ISLAM PROPERLY, IT WILL MAKE US A VERY DISCIPLINED AND LEARNED NATION.

+IT WILL MAKE US POWERFUL AND BE ABLE TO DEFEND OURSELVES INSTEAD OF AS NOW WHEN WE CAN ONLY COLLECT FUNDS WHENEVER SOMETHING HAPPENS TO MUSLIMS ELSEWHERE,+ HE ADDED. - BERNAMA 1150/BW