

MAHATHIR -- SHIPYARD

PASIR GUDANG, NOV. 23 (BERNAMA) -- ⁸² ⁹ DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY DIRECTED THE PUBLIC ENTERPRISES MINISTRY TO LOOK INTO THE PROBLEM OF LACK OF SUPPORT FROM LOCAL SHIP OWNERS FOR LOCAL SHIPYARDS.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SAID THAT LOCAL SHIPYARDS, IN PARTICULAR THE MALAYSIA SHIPYARD AND ENGINEERING SDN. BHD. (MSE) HERE, SHOULD CONDUCT A STUDY TO FIND OUT WHY LOCAL SHIP OWNERS WERE RELUCTANT TO HAVE THEIR VESSELS REPAIRED OR CONSTRUCTED LOCALLY.

THE MSE SHOULD CARRY OUT A STUDY ITSELF TO DETERMINE THE REASONS BEHIND LOCAL SHIP OWNERS SENDING THEIR SHIPS OUT OF THE COUNTRY FOR REPAIRS INSTEAD OF TO IT, HE TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE.

PRESENT WAS PUBLIC ENTERPRISES MINISTER DATIN PADUKA RAFIDAH AZIZ.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO SEE SUCH PROBLEMS FACED BY LOCAL SHIPYARDS, PARTICULARLY THE MSE IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD 78 PER CENT PARTICIPATION, SOLVED QUICKLY.
--MORE 1920/MD

ZCZC N156 (F)
MAHATHIR-SHIPYARD 2 PASIR GUDANG

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID +IT IS VERY DIFFICULT FOR ME TO DETERMINE WHO IS IN THE RIGHT AND WHO IS IN THE WRONG, SO THEREFORE I SHOULD ASK THE MINISTER CONCERNED TO THRASH OUT THIS PROBLEM+.

HE FELT THAT IT COULD BE THAT FOREIGN SHIPYARDS WERE OFFERING RELATIVELY LOWER RATES OR THAT THE SERVICE AT THE MSE WAS FOUND TO BE UNSATISFACTORY BY THEM.

ON THE GOVERNMENT'S PART, HE SAID IT HAD PROVIDED THE MSE TAX-FREE BENEFITS AND OTHER INCENTIVES TO ENABLE THE FIVE-YEAR-OLD SHIPYARD BE MORE COMPETITIVE IN THE SHIP-BUILDING INDUSTRY.

ON ITS PERFORMANCE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE SHIPYARD WAS DOING REMARKABLY WELL AND HAD BEGUN TO GAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET.

HE NOTED THAT A NORWEGIAN LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS TANKER WAS NOW UNDERGOING REPAIRS AT THE SHIPYARD.

ON THE QUESTION OF PLACING GOVERNMENT TECHNOCRATS IN THE MSE TO ENSURE GREATER EFFICIENCY, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID PUTTING GOVERNMENT TECHNOCRATS IN THE MSE WOULD NOT ENSURE THIS WOULD BE SO.

HE ADDED THAT MSE MUST FIND ITS OWN WAY TO SOLVE ALL ITS PROBLEMS. --MORE 1925/MD

MAHATHIR - SHIPYARD 3 PASIR GUDANG

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT THE SHPYARD SHOULD BE FREE TO +HIRE AND FIRE+ AND BE ALLOWED TO RUN LIKE ANY COMMERCIAL FIRM.

ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ENSURE THAT PAYMENT OF DEBTS OWED BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO THE MSE WOULD BE EXPEDITED, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS WERE ALWAYS SLOW IN THEIR PAYMENT OF DEBTS.

+IF YOU ARE PREPARED TO DO BUSINESS WITH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, YOU HAVE GOT TO PUT UP WITH THIS FACTOR+, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR EARLIER ATTENDED AN HOUR-LONG CLOSED DOOR BRIEFING BY THE MSE'S JOINT GENERAL MANAGER ENCIK MOHAMED TAIB IBRAHIM, BEFORE HE WAS TAKEN ON A TOUR AROUND THE SHIPYARD.

THIS IS THE PRIME MINISTER'S FIRST VISIT TO THE SHIPYARD SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1977.

MEANWHILE, DATIN PADUKA RAFIDAH TOLD BERNAMA THAT SHE WOULD BE HOLDING A MEETING WITH LOCAL SHIP OWNERS, PARTICULARLY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MALAYSIAN INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING CORPORATION (MISC), IN KUALA LUMPUR ON DEC. 6.

SHE SAID SHE WOULD GET TO THE BOTTOM WHY LOCAL SHIP OWNERS CONTINUED TO SEND THEIR SHIPS TO FOREIGN SHIPYARDS FOR REPAIRS.

--BERNAMA 1932/MD