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MELAKA: DEC. 19 (BERNAMA) (P) DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD URGED GOVERNMENT OFFICERS AND POLITICAL LEADERS TODAY TO DEVOTE THEIR TIME AND ENERGY TO DEVELOPING THE COUNTRY.

HE TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT SERI PERINGGIT HERE AT THE END OF HIS TWO-DAY VISIT TO MELAKA THAT THEY HAD HEAVY RESPONSIBILITIES TO SHOULDER AND COULD NOT AFFORD TO WASTE TIME ON NON-BENEFICIAL ACTIVITIES.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HIS VISIT TO MELAKA HAD GIVEN HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES WITH OFFICERS AND POLITICIANS IN THE STATE.

IT HAD ALSO ENABLED HIM TO KEEP TABS ON PROGRESS IN THE STATE.

HE SAID THAT IN HIS MEETING WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICERS AND BN POLITICIANS, HE HAD EXPLAINED TO THEM THE GOVERNMENT'S CLEAN, EFFICIENT AND TRUSTWORTHY SLOGAN.

HE ALSO HAD MEETINGS WITH SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS AT SERI NEGERI FRIDAY AND BN STATE LEADERS AT SERI BENDAHARA LAST NIGHT.

--MORE 1203/HM

ZCZC ND16 (F)

MAHATHIR - PRESS 2 MELAKA

RESPONDING TO A QUESTION FROM A PRESSMAN, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID CULTURAL SHOWS FOR OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS MUST REFLECT THE CONCEPT OF THE NATIONAL CULTURE.

HOWEVER, THERE WERE NO PROHIBITIONS ON ANY COMMUNITY TO HAVE THEIR OWN CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS AMONG THEMSELVES.

HE STRESSED THAT MALAYSIA ADOPTED A MOST LIBERAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS CULTURES AND CUSTOMS, AN ATTITUDE MORE TOLERANT THAN THAT OF BRITAIN OR AMERICA.

THIS ATTITUDE ACCOUNTED FOR THE FACT THAT SKINS IN THE ARMED FORCES WERE ALLOWED TO WEAR THEIR TURBANS AND THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNITY IN MELAKA ALLOWED TO PRACTISE THEIR OWN CULTURE AND CUSTOMS.

ON THE REQUEST BY STATES THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SET UP MORE INDUSTRIES IN THEIR AREAS, HE SAID ESTABLISHMENT OF INDUSTRIES IN ANY STATE MUST FULFIL ECONOMIC VIABILITY REQUIREMENTS. --MORE

MAHATHIR - PRESS 3 MELAKA

INDUSTRIES SHOULD NOT BE CREATED MERELY FOR THEIR PRESTIGE VALUE AS THIS WOULD ONLY BURDEN THE PEOPLE, HE ADDED.

ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN MELAKA, HE SAID IT WAS +CALM.+ +HOWEVER, IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT STILL WATERS WILL NOT HAVE CROCODILES. WE MUST ALWAYS BE VIGILANT.+

UMNO POLITICS IN MELAKA EXPERIENCED A PERIOD OF TURMOIL IN 1978 WHEN A GROUP WANTED TO TOPPLE THE THEN EXISTING PARTY LEADERSHIP IN THE STATE.

THIS LED TO INTERVENTION AT CENTRAL LEVEL, WITH THE POST OF STATE LIAISON CHIEF TAKEN OVER BY DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR AND LATER BY DATUK MUSA HITAM.

IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR, THE POST WAS +RESTORED+ TO THE STATE WHEN IT FELL TO A MELAKA LEADER, ENCIK ADIB ADAM, WHO IS THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION. --MORE 1211/HM

ON MELAKA'S REQUEST FOR DIRECT AIR LINKS WITH SINGAPORE VIA MAS, EITHER IN THE FORM OF THE SINGAPORE-MELAKA OR SINGAPORE-MELAKA-KUALA LUMPUR ROUTE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THIS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.

THE PROPOSAL WAS IN LINE WITH THE COUNTRY'S TOURISM POLICY OF HAVING DIRECT FLIGHTS TO TOURISM DESTINATIONS SUCH AS MELAKA, PULAU LANGKAWI AND PULAU TIOMAN. --BERNAMA 1214/HM