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TELUK INTAN, MARCH 27 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY CRITICISED A SECTION OF THE PEOPLE WHO CALL THEMSELVES ULAMAS BUT ACT AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY.

THIS GROUP WAS SO IMPATIENT TO COME INTO POWER THAT IT TOPPLED ITS OWN LEADER AND ACCUSED HIM OF NOT BEING AN ULAMA, HE ADDED WHEN OPENING THE BUILDING OF THE HILIR PERAK, TELUK INTAN AND BAGAN DATOH UMNO DIVISIONS HERE.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THIS SO-CALLED ULAMAS WOULD COME TO KENERING TO CAMPAIGN AND DECEIVE THE PEOPLE BY SAYING THAT THE GOVERNMENT LED BY UMNO AND THE BARISAN NASIONAL WAS HIGHLY ORIENTED TOWARDS MATERIALISM.

+BUT WHO ARE THESE ULAMAS...?+ HE ASKED.

HE SAID THAT SOME PEOPLE WHO RECENTLY RETURNED WITH LAW DEGREES FROM LONDON WERE EVEN STYLED AS ULAMAS. -- MORE 1729/MK

MAHATHIR - ULAMA 2 TELUK INTAN

HE SAID THAT THE ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF AN ULAMA WAS A RELIGIOUS LEADER WHO HAD NOT ONLY EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE OF RELIGIOUS MATTERS BUT ALSO A LONG ASSOCIATION WITH THE COMMUNITY AROUND HIM IN GUILDING THEM IN RELIGIOUS ISSUES.

BUT THE ULAMAS OF THIS PARTY WERE DIFFERENT, HE SAID. THEY DESIRED POWER AND WANTED EVERYTHING TO BE REFERRED TO THEM.

+I AM NOT TRYING TO SIDE WITH THE GROUP'S PREVIOUS LEADERS,+ HE SAID, ADDING THAT HE WAS MYSTIFIED BY THE ACTIONS OF +THIS GROUP OF ULAMAS+ WHO WERE SO IMPATIENT TO SEIZE POWER.

HE SAID UMNO HAD NEVER GIVEN RELEGATED ISLAM TO THE BACK SEAT IN ITS ADMINISTRATION OF THE COUNTRY WHERE THE POPULATION WERE OF DIVERSE RACES AND RELIGIONS.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID ISLAM ITSELF PRESCRIBED JUSTICE FOR PEOPLE OF ALL RACES AND RELIGIONS SO THAT THEY COULD BENEFIT FROM A STABLE AND PEACEFUL NATION.

THE MENTERI BESAR, ENCIK RAMLI NGAH TALIB, URGED UMNO DIVISIONAL LEADERS TO GO TO KENERING TO HELP THE BARISAN NASIONAL RETAIN THE STATE SEAT IN THE BY-ELECTION.

THE BY-ELECTION WAS CAUSED BY RESIGNATION FROM THE SEAT BY FORMER RAK MENTERI BESAR DATUK SERI WAN MOHAMED WAN TEH. -- BERNAMA 1658/