
 BY REJAL ARBEE AND ABDUL RAHMAN SULAIMAN

KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 15 (BERNAMA)-- DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAYS THE GOVERNMENT WILL FIND WAYS TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEM OF FIXING THE DATES FOR THE START OF FASTING AND HARI RAYA TO AVOID A RECURRENT OF MISUNDERSTANDING SIMILAR TO THE ONE EXPERIENCED THIS YEAR.

THE PRIME MINISTER, HOWEVER, STRESSED THAT ANY MEASURE TO BE TAKEN BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE WITHIN THE SCOPE OF ITS JURISDICTION IN THE MATTER.

+ALTHOUGH WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO OVERCOME SUCH A PROBLEM THIS TIME, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT OTHER PROBLEMS WILL NOT SURFACE IN THE FUTURE,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WAS ASKED ON THE RECENT CASE WHERE AT LEAST TWO STATES FIXED THE BEGINNING OF FASTING ONE DAY EARLIER THAN THE OTHERS.

PERAK AND JOHOR STARTED FASTING ONE DAY EARLIER AS THEY FIXED THE DATE ACCORDING TO +HISAB+ WHILE THE REST OF THE STATES OBSERVED THE DECISION OF THE CONFERENCE OF RULERS WHICH FIXED THE DATE THROUGH +FALAK AND ROKYAH.+ -- MORE 1114/OM

ZCZC NO38:

MAHATHIR - FASTING 2 KUALA LUMPUR

ASKED ON THE STEPS TO BE TAKEN, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID HE MUST UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM IN DEPTH AND THE EFFECTS OF SUCH STEPS ON THE CONSTITUTION BEFORE TAKING ANY ACTION.

+I THINK NO-ONE IN THIS COUNTRY WOULD LIKE TO SEE A SPLIT IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY. PERHAPS THEIR VIEWS AND WAYS OF OVERCOMING THIS PROBLEM DIFFER,+ HE ADDED.

HE AGREED THAT THE DIFFERING VIEWS HAD BROUGHT ABOUT A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE COUNTRY'S IMAGE, ESPECIALLY AT A TIME WHEN THE GOVERNMENT WAS WORKING TOWARDS INSTILLING ISLAMIC VALUES IN THE ADMINISTRATION.

+HOWEVER, I HAVE NO APOLOGY TO MAKE ON THIS MATTER. I AM DISAPPOINTED THAT SUCH A THING HAS HAPPENED. HOWEVER I FEEL I SHOULD NOT MAKE ANY STATEMENT WHICH IS NOT CONSTRUCTIVE.+ -- MORE 1117/OM

ZCZC NO39:

MAHATHIR - FASTING 3 KUALA LUMPUR

ASKED IF HE AGREED THAT THERE WERE SOME WEAKNESSES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF ISLAMIC AFFAIRS AND THE RUNNING OF THE CONFERENCE OF RULERS, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE AGREED THAT THE EXISTING SYSTEM WAS NOT PERFECT.

+THAT IS WHY WE HAVE PROBLEMS. IT IS HARD TO ACHIEVE PERFECTION AND AS SUCH WE SHOULD STRIVE TO FIND WAYS WITHIN OUR MEANS, TO OVERCOME WHATEVER PROBLEM+, HE SAID.

ON THE SUGGESTION MADE BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN THAT THE GOVERNMENT REVIEW THE CONSTITUTION RELATING TO THE POWERS OF THE SULTANS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID HE APPRECIATED THE TUNKU'S VIEWS.

+I RESPECT HIS VIEWS AS HE IS THE STATESMAN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DRAFTING OF THE MALAYSIAN CONSTITUTION. THERE MUST BE GOOD REASONS FOR THE TUNKU TO MAKE THE SUGGESTION.

+BUT I AM NOT TO SURE HOW WE CAN DO IT WITHOUT GOING AGAINST CERTAIN PROVISIONS IN THE CONSTITUTION,+ HE ADDED. -- MORE 1120/OM

ZCZC NO40:

MAHATHIR - FASTING 4 KUALA LUMPUR

+THIS MATTER HAS TO BE STUDIED IN DEPTH AND IT NEEDS LEGAL EXPERTISE ESPECIALLY IN CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS. AS SUCH I FEEL THAT IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO COMMENT ON IT HERE,+ HE SAID. -- BERNAMA 1122/OM