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KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 28 (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT GIVE HOUSING ALLOWANCES TO MIDDLE AND LOWER INCOME CIVIL SERVANTS UNTIL THE ECONOMIC SITUATION NORMALISES.

+I AM SORRY FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO FULFILL THE NEEDS OF GOVERNMENT WORKERS' UNIONS WITH REGARD TO VARIOUS CLAIMS BUT I PROMISE THE WELFARE OF THE WORKERS WILL BE GIVEN APPROPRIATE ATTENTION WHEN THE SITUATION ALLOWS IT,+ HE SAID.

+BE PATIENT AND LET US TOGETHER WORK FOR A GOOD CIVIL SERVICE. LET US ALSO TOGETHER PRAY THAT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION RECOVERS QUICKLY SO THAT WE CAN DEVISE BETTER STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL, INCLUDING CIVIL SERVANTS,+ HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WAS RESPONDING TO REQUESTS MADE BY OUTGOING CUEPACS PRESIDENT ENCIK T. NARENDRAN WHEN SPEAKING AT THE 16TH CUEPACS CONVENTION HERE.

+THE HOUSING ALLOWANCE PROBLEM WAS BROUGHT UP SINCE LAST YEAR AND I HAVE GIVEN IT MUCH THOUGHT AND HAVE NOT DECIDED. BUT, IN VIEW OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION, I CANNOT CONSIDER IT.+ -- MORE
2313/MK

ZCZC N204 (F/S)
MAHATHIR - ALLOWANCE 2 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID: +IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT I DO NOT HAVE THE GOVERNMENT WORKERS' PROBLEMS AT HEART BUT EVEN IF I AM THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE NEXT 1,000 YEARS, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO ENTERTAIN ALL THEIR CLAIMS.

+GOD WILLING, WE WILL LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF REVISING THE PAY WHEN THE TIME COMES,+ HE REMARKED AMIDST LAUGHTER BY THE DELEGATES.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO ENTERTAIN ALL THE CLAIMS BECAUSE IF ALL CLAIMS BY A CERTAIN SECTION WAS ENTERTAINED, ANOTHER SECTION WOULD ALSO WANT ALL ITS CLAIMS TO BE MET AND THIS WOULD RESULT IN PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

+AS A POLITICIAN, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR ME NOT TO MAKE ANY PROMISES IN MY SPEECH,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID HE HAD DIRECTED ALL BARISAN NASIONAL ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES NOT TO MAKE EMPTY PROMISES SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE REPRIMANDED BY THE PEOPLE IF PROMISES WERE NOT FULFILLED.

ACCORDING TO HIM, OUT OF THE \$16.7 BILION FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE LAST YEAR, IT SPENT MORE THAN ONE THIRD OF THE SUM -- \$6.7 BILLION-- TO PAY THE 700,000 GOVERNMENT SERVANTS, INCLUDING ALLOWANCES AND PENSIONS. -- BERNAMA 2332/MK