

MAHATHIR - BERNAMA
BM

83 (P)
KUALA LUMPUR, AUG. 6 (BERNAMA)--DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY STRESSED THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN BERNAMA, THE NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY OF MALAYSIA, FOR DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTIC FUNCTIONS IN LINE WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF THE COUNTRY HANDLING ITS OWN COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS.

THE PRIME MINISTER REGRETTED THAT MALAYSIA WAS STILL HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE.

MALAYSIA SHOULD MAKE EFFORTS TO DEVELOP CAPABILITY IN THE MATTER, HE ADDED WHEN OPENING THE SYMPOSIUM ON +TOWARDS A NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY+ AT THE ASIA AND PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (PADC) HERE.

+THE TIME HAS COME TO REINFORCE OUR COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE OURSELVES AND THIS AMONG OTHER THINGS ENTAILS STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY FOR DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN NEWS COVERAGE FUNCTIONS,+ HE SAID.

HIS STATEMENT WAS AN APPARENT INDICATION OF SUPPORT FOR BERNAMA'S MOVE TO TAKE OVER DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICES OF FOREIGN NEWS AGENCIES TO LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER SUBSCRIBERS.

THE MOVE, ANNOUNCED BY INFORMATION MINISTER ENCIK ADIB ADAM RECENTLY, HAD DRAWN ADVERSE CRITICISM FROM LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AND THE NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION OF MALAYSIA. --MORE 1440/MD

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT DISCUSSIONS ON A NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER HAD ATTRACTED WORLD ATTENTION FOR NEARLY TWO CENTURIES AND THAT +ALTHOUGH THE ISSUE OF SELF-RELIANCE HAD ALWAYS BEEN LAUDED, ACHIEVEMENT TOWARDS THIS END WAS NOT UP TO EXPECTATIONS.+

THE TREND OF ONE-WAY FLOW OF INFORMATION WAS STILL EXISTING, HE ADDED.

+IT IS SO UNFAIR WHEN NEWS AGENCIES OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES CAN DISSEMINATE THEIR NEWS AND EARN PROFITS FROM THEIR SERVICE BUT AGENCIES FROM COUNTRIES LIKE MALAYSIA CANNOT GET CLIENTS FROM THE MEDIA OF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.+

HE SAID THE OUTFLOW OF MONEY FROM A POOR COUNTRY TO A RICH ONE WAS PLAIN INJUSTICE.

HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE IMBALANCE IN FLOW OF INFORMATION WHICH WAS PREDOMINANTLY IN A NORTH-SOUTH DIRECTION AND THE NEED FOR SELF-RELIANCE IN DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION MATERIALS, WHETHER DOCUMENTARY OR ENTERTAINMENT IN NATURE, WITHOUT DEPENDENCE ON OUTSIDE SOURCES. --MORE 1505/MD

ZCZC NO43 (F/S)
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+IT IS NECESSARY TO MAKE THESE MOVES BECAUSE A WEAK AND INEFFECTUAL DOMESTIC SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION WILL LEAD TO INFILTRATION OF UNDESIRABLE INFLUENCES.+

MALAYSIA SHOULD ALSO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN REGIONAL AND DEVELOPING WORLD COOPERATION TO IMPROVE CAPABILITIES AS WELL AS TO HAVE JOINT EXCHANGES FOR SAFEGUARDING REGIONAL IDENTITY AND INTERESTS.

HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY HAD ITS BENEFITS, IT ALSO CARRIED CERTAIN IMPLICATIONS, PARTICULARLY FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

APART FROM CREATING A SITUATION OF IMBALANCE, IT COULD ALSO LEAD TO DOMINATION OF A TECHNOLOGICALLY WEAK COUNTRY BY A TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED ONE.

+IN OUR CASE, IT COULD THWART OUR ASPIRATIONS AND WISHES TO BUILD OUR OWN NATIONAL IDEOLOGY AND WAY OF LIFE AND PROMOTE THE VALUES WE CHERISH,+ HE ADDED.

THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL HAZARD WAS THAT THOSE IN CONTROL OF THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION MIGHT USE THE COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AT THEIR DISPOSAL TO SERVE THEIR OWN MOTIVES OR INTERESTS. --MORE

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HE CITED THE OPENING OF THE WORLD'S FIRST SATELLITE COMMUNICATION CENTRE BY THE UNITED STATES IN JUNE AS A CASE IN POINT, WHERE THE INFORMATION CAPABILITIES REPRESENTED BY SUCH AN ACHIEVEMENT ASTOUNDING FEAT BUT ALSO A CAUSE FOR CONCERN.

HE SAID THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WERE COMPETING TO POSSESS ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION IN EVERY KNOWN FIELD.

+IN VIEW OF THE SITUATION, MALAYSIA MUST INTENSIFY DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXISTING MEDIA AND FACILITIES AS WELL AS OF TRAINING IN HANDLING THE NEW SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION.+

THE PERSONNEL REQUIRED INCLUDED THOSE PRODUCING AND UTILIZING COMMUNICATIONS APPARATUS FOR GATHERING AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AND THOSE INVOLVED IN OPERATING THESE EQUIPMENT.

IT WAS ENVISAGED THAT THE WORK IN THE FIELD WOULD BECOME MORE SPECIALIZED AND THAT ANY SHORTCOMING IN THE TRAINING AND EXPERTISE WOULD RESULT IN FAILURE TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE OF SELF-RELIANCE. -- MORE 1829/MK

ZCZC 8097

MAHATHIR - BERNAMA 5 KUALA LUMPUR

IN STRESSING THE NEED FOR THE COUNTRY TO MANAGE ITS OWN NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID INTER-PERSONAL MEDIA SHOULD NOT BE NEGLECTED.

THIS WAS IMPORTANT IN THE LIGHT OF THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL COMMUNITY, MUTUAL HELP, CONSENSUS, MUTUAL RESPECT AND SOCIAL HARMONY PRACTISED IN MALAYSIA AND THIS SPIRIT SHOULD ALWAYS BE NURTURED AS AN IMPORTANT CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION.

THE PRIME MINISTER ASKED THE COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA TO PRESENT AN ACCURATE PICTURE OF GOVERNMENT MESSAGE AND INFORMATION TO AVERT ANY MISUNDERSTANDING OR MISINTERPRETATION.

HE SAID MISUNDERSTANDING OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES OCCURRED WHEN THE COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA NEGLECTED ITS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE COUNTRY AND PEOPLE.

+IN SUCH CASES, THE MEDIA CHANNELS HAD TRIED TO INTERPRET NATIONAL ISSUES AND PROBLEMS FROM THEIR OWN POINT OF VIEW WHICH WAS BASED ON EITHER SUBJECTIVE OR WESTERN VALUES WHICH MAY NOT BE IN CONFORMITY WITH NATIONAL VALUES.+

HE SAID THEY ABDICATED THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROFIT OR NAME AND THEIR ACTION WOULD LEAD TO ABUSE OF FREEDOM AND BRING ABOUT CHAOS IN THE COUNTRY. -- MORE 1835/MK

ZCZC N098 (F/S)

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT THE MASS MEDIA SHOULD CONFINE ITS ROLE TO ONLY DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AND MESSAGES AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

THE MASS MEDIA SHOULD ALSO ACT AS A VEHICLE FOR CHANNELLING OF FEEDBACK, IDENTIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND PRIORITIES AND EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT TARGET PERFORMANCE WITHOUT HOWEVER BECOMING AN INSTRUMENT ENDANGERING THE BASIC PRINCIPLES THAT HAD BEEN ACCEPTED.

+WHAT WE REQUIRE IS A CRITICAL YET HEALTHY AND CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK WHICH CAN GUIDE THE GOVERNMENT IN ITS ROLE AS TRUSTEE FOR THE PEOPLE IN CARRYING OUT EFFORTS TO SECURE ACHIEVEMENT OF NATIONAL GOAL

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES,+ HE SAID. -- BERNAMA 1838/MK