

MAHATHIR - MARRIAGE
BH

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(P)

KUALA LUMPUR, AUG. 19 (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THAT THERE WERE STRONG RUMOURS GOING ROUND THAT HE HAD TAKEN ANOTHER WIFE AND HAD A SON BY HER.

"NOT ONLY HAVE MY CABINET MINISTERS BEEN THE TARGET OF POISON PEN LETTERS BUT EVEN I MYSELF HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO ACCUSATIONS THAT I HAVE MARRIED ANOTHER WIFE AND HAVE A SON BY HER," HE TOLD REPORTERS TODAY

AMIDST LAUGHTER FROM THOSE PRESENT, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT SUCH ALLEGATIONS WERE COMPLETELY BASELESS BECAUSE "AS YOU ALL KNOW, MY LIFE CONSISTS OF GOING TO THE OFFICE AND THEN BACK TO THE HOUSE AFTER WORK. IF I GO ANYWHERE, I AM ACCOMPANIED BY MY WIFE.

"I AM ALWAYS ACCOMPANIED BY MY WIFE, EVEN WHEN I GO OUT OF THE COUNTRY, AND WHEREVER I GO SHE IS WITH ME.

"AS SUCH, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE THAT I HAVE GOT MARRIED AGAIN," HE SAID. -- MORE 1455/II

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HE SAID THIS TO CLARIFY HIS SPEECH AT THE UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN WHICH HE MENTIONED THAT RUMOURS HAD BEEN CARRIED FROM MOUTH-TO-MOUTH AND THAT THESE RUMOURS HAD BEEN EMBELLISHED WITH EACH TELLING.

"IF THEY ARE MARRIED, THE RUMOURS ARE THAT THEY HAVE TAKEN ANOTHER ONE OR TWO WIVES, COMPLETE WITH ALL THE DETAILS," HE TOLD THE UMNO DELEGATES.

HE RELATED HOW AT ONE TIME WHEN A VERY THIN MINISTER WAS CONTESTING IN THE PARTY ELECTIONS, STORIES WERE TOLD THAT HE HAD TAKEN ANOTHER WIFE.

"TODAY, THE MINISTER CONCERNED HAS RETIRED AND THERE WE ARE NO MORE SUCH STORIES. THEREFORE, WE KNOW THAT SUCH STORIES WERE UNTRUE.

"LIKEWISE WITH THE CASE OF A MINISTER FROM THE STATE OF HANG TUAH. ALL TYPES OF PAMPHLETS WERE DISTRIBUTED. BUT TODAY WE KNOW THAT SUCH STORIES WERE COMPLETELY WITHOUT BASIS."

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT HE COULD GO ON GIVING INSTANCES OF SUCH ALLEGATIONS WHICH WOULD MAKE THEM LAUGH BUT "THOUGH WE KNOW THAT SUCH STORIES WERE UNTRUE, WE WILL NOT DISMISS THEM IF WE HEAR THEM AGAIN.

"WE WILL ACCEPT SUCH STORIES AND PASS THEM ON," HE SAID.
-- MORE 1502/II

ICIC NO63

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR LATER TOLD NEWSMEN THAT POISON PEN LETTERS WITH SUCH ALLEGATIONS WERE STILL MAKING THE ROUNDS.

ASKED WHETHER HE WAS ANGRY WITH THE ALLEGATIONS THAT HE HAD TAKEN ANOTHER WIFE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, "NO, BECAUSE I HAVE NOT DONE WHAT THEY ALLEGED."

HE SAID HE HAD ALSO HEARD STORIES THAT JOURNALISTS WERE "VERY PALLY" WITH CABINET MINISTERS.

HE SAID THAT CHARACTER ASSASSINATION SHOULD CEASE BECAUSE THE TARGETS OF SUCH ATTACKS COULD NOT DEFEND THEMSELVES.

"THEY CANNOT MAKE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS THAT WHAT HAS BEEN SAID OF THEM IS NOT TRUE," HE SAID.

HE REGRETTED THAT MINISTERS WHO WERE OUT OF THE COUNTRY OFTEN ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS AND WHO DID NOT BRING THEIR WIVES WITH THEM WERE OPEN TO SUCH ATTACKS ON THEIR CHARACTER. -- BERNAMA 1505/II