

MAHATHIR - CONSTITUTION
BM

MELAKA, DEC 19 (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY CRITICISED CERTAIN GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO TRIED TO INSTIGATE THE RULERS AGAINST THE PEOPLE BY MAKING ALLEGATIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD COMPROMISED SO MUCH IN RESOLVING THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ISSUE THAT THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN NEGLECTED.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT SUCH ALLEGATIONS HAD BEEN SPREAD BY PEOPLE WHO WERE TRYING TO FISH IN TROUBLED WATERS, INCLUDING A LOCAL NEWSPAPER, BECAUSE THE AMENDMENT WAS SIGNED BY THE TIMBALAN YANG DI-PERTUAN AGONG ON DEC. 15.

HE SAID THAT SUCH ALLEGATIONS WERE MOTIVATED BY TWO FACTORS, THE WISH TO SEE HIM CRITICISED BY THE PEOPLE FOR ACCEPTING DEFEAT AND TO SEE HIM MAKE A CLARIFICATION WHICH IN THE PROCESS WOULD INCUR THE WRATH OF OTHERS.

"IF I MAKE A CLARIFICATION, OTHER PEOPLE WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED AND ONCE AGAIN A DISPUTE WILL ARISE WHICH WILL ONLY BENEFIT THOSE OUT TO CAUSE THE TROUBLE," HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS ADDRESSING ABOUT 80,000 PEOPLE AT THE PADANG PAHLAWAN WHO HAD COME TO GREET HIM AND OFFER THEIR CONGRATULATIONS ON THE SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ISSUE. -- MORE 1605/II

MAHATHIR - CONSTITUTION 2 MELAKA

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE ISSUE HAD BEEN RESOLVED THROUGH A COMPROMISE BUT STRESSED THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE COULD NOT 'BE SOLD SO CHEAPLY.'

'WE DO NOT WANT TO TAKE EVERYTHING BUT WE HOLD FIRM TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT IT IS ULTIMATELY THE PEOPLE WHO DETERMINE THE COUNTRY'S ADMINISTRATION.

'MERELY EXTENDED THE PERIOD FOR THE ROYAL ASSENT FOR BILLS FROM 15 DAYS TO 60 DAYS.

'THE OTHERS HAVE NOT BEEN AGREED TO BLINDLY BUT THERE ARE CONDITIONS. YOU MUST TRUST US THAT WE WILL NOT GIVE AWAY THE PEOPLE'S RIGHTS JUST LIKE THAT,' HE SAID TO CHEERS OF 'LONG LIVE MAHATHIR.'

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ESPECIALLY ANGRY AT THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER REPORT WHICH SAID THAT THOUGH THE CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL ISSUE HAD BEEN SETTLED, IT WOULD STILL BE AN ISSUE IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE PARTY LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS ON MAY 25. -- MORE 1620/II

MAHATHIR - CONSTITUTION 3 MELAKA

THE NEWSPAPER CLAIMED THAT THIS WAS BECAUSE MANY UMNO MEMBERS WERE NOT HAPPY WITH THE GOVERNMENT AS IT HAD BACKED DOWN FROM ITS ORIGINAL POSITION ON THE ISSUE AND HAD MADE VARIOUS COMPROMISES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO UMNO PRESIDENT, FELT THAT THE NEWSPAPER HAD RAISED THE ISSUE TO BOOST ITS CIRCULATION.

WHEN THE CROWD SHOUTED 'CLOSE THE NEWSPAPER,' THE PRIME MINISTER REMINDED THE NEWSPAPER NOT TO MISTAKE ITS LIBERAL ATTITUDE FOR WEAKNESS.

'WE GIVE PERMISSION AND FREEDOM TO THE NEWSPAPER, BUT THEY SHOULD NOT CONSIDER US BECAUSE WE ARE LENIENT.'

'WE CAN REVOKE WHATEVER PERMITS WE HAVE GIVEN AND THEY SHOULD BE A BIT POLITE IN THIS MATTER,' HE SAID. -- MORE 1645/II

MAHATHIR-CONSTITUTION 4 MELAKA

HE DID NOT WANT CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ISSUE TO BE USED TO UNDERMINE THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE RULERS AND THE PEOPLE AND THAT BETWEEN THE UMNO LEADERS AND THEIR MEMBERS.

HE ALSO WARNED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION AGAINST ANY ONE, BOTH WITHIN THE COUNTRY OR ABROAD WHO CAUSED SUCH A SPLIT.

HE BELIEVED THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE LIKE THAT WHICH THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ISSUE RECEIVED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT THE AMENDMENT ISSUE COULD HAVE BEEN RESOLVED EARLIER WHEN UMNO VICE-PRESIDENT ENCIK GHAFAR BABA AND THE UMNO DELEGATION HAD AN AUDIENCE WITH THE RULERS AT ISTANA BUKIT KAYANGAN ON NOV. 20 IF NOT FOR THOSE WHO HAD SAID THAT THE ISSUE DID NOT HAVE THE UNANIMOUS SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE.

+THEY HAD STATED THAT UMNO ITSELF WAS DIVIDED, THAT OTHER PARTIES IN THE BARISAN NASIONAL, INCLUDING THE MIC AND MCA DID NOT AGREE WITH THE AMENDMENTS AND THAT THE CHINESE AND INDIANS DID NOT AGREE,+

-- MORE 1709/PA

MAHATHIR-CONSTITUTION 5 MELAKA

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO CRITICISED THOSE WHO HAD STATED THAT PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED SUCH GATHERINGS HAD BEEN FORCED TO DO SO TO HOODWINK THE WORLD.

WHEN THE CROWD SHOUTED '+LIES LIES+', THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THESE PEOPLE WERE NOT BRAVE ENOUGH TO COME HERE BECAUSE IF THEY DID, THEY WOULD BE PROPERLY HUMILIATED. -- BERNAMA 1710/PA