

MAHATHIR-POPULATION

BM

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KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 6 (BERNAMA)--WOMEN GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WILL ENJOY MATERNITY LEAVE AND OTHER MATERNITY BENEFITS WHEN DELIVERING UP TO FIVE CHILDREN, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE DECISION TO INCREASE THE MATERNITY LEAVE AND BENEFITS, WHICH WAS NOW LIMITED TO THREE CHILDREN, WAS REACHED AT A CABINET MEETING ON WEDNESDAY.

THIS MEANS THAT WOMEN GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES CAN HAVE UP TO FIVE CHILDREN AND RECEIVE 42 DAYS-LEAVE AND FREE THE HOSPITAL BENEFITS.

PRIOR TO THIS, A WOMAN GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE DELIVERING THE HER FOURTH CHILD WOULD HAVE TO TAKE HER ANNUAL LEAVE AND FOOT THE HOSPITAL BILL HERSELF.

SPEAKING AT A PRESS CONFERENCE HERE DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT IN EXTENDING THE MATERNITY-BENEFITS THE CURRENT LABOUR LAWS, WOULD BE AMENDED.

THIS IS IN LINE WITH PRIME MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT WHEN TABLING THE MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE FOURTH MALAYSIA PLAN IN THE DEWAN RAKYAT LAST THURSDAY THAT THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION COULD REACH 70 MILLION IN THE NEXT 115 YEARS. --MORE 1803/HM

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HE SAID THAT TOGETHER WITH THIS OBJECTIVE, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD EMPHASISE FAMILY PLANNING AND THE LIMITATION OF CHILD BIRTH.

THE CAMPAIGN, TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE POPULATION AND FAMILY PLANNING BOARD. (FORMERLY THE FAMILY PLANNING BOARD), WOULD STRESS THE NEED TO HAVE MORE WELL-SPACED CHILDREN.

+WE ARE WORKING ON THIS BECAUSE OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO HAVE A GOOD AND HEALTHY POPULATION,+ HE SAID.

ASKED WHAT STEPS WOULD BE TAKEN TO ENCOURAGE MALAYSIANS TO INCREASE THE SIZE OF THEIR FAMILIES, AS THE PEOPLE WERE NOW ATTUNED TO THE IDEA OF A SMALL FAMILY, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID +WE HAVE WAYS TO CHANGE THIS ATTITUDE,+

+WE CAN BE PIONEERS IN INCREASING THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND NOT BE BOUNDED BY THE CONCEPT OF OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH WANT TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN.+ -- MORE 1712/SL  
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HE SAID THAT AS A DOCTOR, HE WOULD ADVISE WOMEN, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAD JUST MARRIED, TO HAVE CHILDREN BEFORE THINKING OF FAMILY PLANNING.

+WHILE I WAS PRACTISING MEDICINE IN THE PAST, SOME MOTHERS-IN-LAW HAVE COME TO SEE ME SAYING THAT THEIR DAUGHTERS BE ALLOWED TO ENJOY LIFE WITH THEIR HUSBANDS BEFORE THINKING ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF HAVING CHILDREN.+

THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT FORESEE ANY PROBLEM OR BURDEN TO THE GOVERNMENT IF THE WOMEN OCCASIONALLY TOOK MATERNITY LEAVE IN LINE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS TO INCREASE THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION.

HE SAID THAT IN FACTORS FOR EXAMPLE, IT WOULD BE NO PROBLEM BECAUSE THEY COULD THINK OUT WAYS FOR ROBOTS TO PERFORM THE TASKS WHICH WERE NOW HANDLED BY WOMEN.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF BEDS AT HOSPITALS AND OTHER HEALTH FACILITIES TO MEET THE DEMAND OF MORE WOMEN WISHING TO DELIVER BABIES.

+WITH US INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY AND THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO HAND OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF SOME PROJECTS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR, MORE REVENUE WOULD BE OBTAINED WHICH CAN BE USED TO BUILD MORE SCHOOLS AND HOSPITAL,+ HE SAID. -- MORE 1836/SL

**DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE OF INCREASING THE POPULATION TO 70 MILLION WAS BASED ON THE FACT THAT THE COUNTRY COULD SUPPORT A POPULATION OF THAT NUMBER AND ALSO BECAUSE IT NEEDED THE MANPOWER TO DEVELOP THE COUNTRY.**

HE SAID THE TOTAL POPULATION IN MALAYSIA WAS THE SMALLEST IN **ASEAN** COMPARED WITH THE 150 MILLION IN **INDONESIA** AND THE PHILIPPINES AND THAILAND EACH HAVING MORE THAN **50** MILLION. **EVEN** THOUGH THEIR PER CAPITA INCOME **WAS LOWER** AND THE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING THEIR PRODUCTION WAS CORRESPONDINGLY SMALLER.

HE BELIEVED THAT WITH A BIGGER WORKFORCE, **MALAYSIA** NEED LONGER RECRUIT WORKERS **FROM THAILAND, THE PHILIPPINES AND INDONESIA** FOR ITS **PROJECTS**.

HE SAID A LARGER POPULATION WOULD NOT BE AN OBSTACLE TO **MALAYSIA** PROVIDED **THAT THE** PEOPLE CHANGED THEIR CULTURE TO THAT BASED ON **EFFICIENCY, DILIGENCE, SINCERITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**, THE QUALITIES THAT WERE NOW **BEING** INCULCATED.

**+IF WE STRIVE TO HAVE A GOOD ADMINISTRATION AND IF OUR PRODUCTIVITY IS HIGH, IT WILL NOT BE A PROBLEM FOR US TO INCREASE OUR POPULATION AS IT WILL BE AN ADVANTAGE TO US,+** HE SAID.

BERNAMA 1990/MB

#### **MAHATHIR-POPULATION 5 KUALA LUMPUR**

**DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR EXPRESSED REGRET WITH CERTAIN** QUARTERS WHICH HAD QUESTIONED THE **GOVERNMENT'S DECISION** TO INCREASE THE POPULATION TO **70** MILLION AND **SAYING THAT IT WAS UNREALISTIC.**

**+THIS ESTIMATE IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS NORMAL GROWTH IN 115 YEARS. I DID NOT SAY THAT THE INCREASE WOULD OCCUR OVERNIGHT BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE.+**

HE SAID THE ESTIMATE WAS **BASED ON THE INCREASE IN THE** BIRTH RATE OF 3.2 PER CENT ANNUALLY AND BY 119 YEARS **IT WOULD INCREASE TO 70 MILLION.**

HOWEVER IF THE **ESTIMATES WERE** TO BE BASED ON A BIRTH RATE OF 2.3 PER CENT PER **ANNUM**, THEN THE COUNTRY'S **POPULATION WOULD MERELY NUMBER 35** MILLION DURING THAT PERIOD.

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