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KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 11 (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THAT ALL MINISTERS HAD BEEN DIRECTED TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER AGENCIES UNDER THEIR MINISTRIES HAVING OFF-BUDGET ALLOCATIONS HAD HAD SUCH ALLOCATIONS AUDITED.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT AS FAR AS HE KNEW, ALL SUCH AGENCIES WERE AUDITED BY PRIVATE FIRMS BECAUSE SUCH AGENCIES WERE CARRYING OUT BUSINESS.

WE PRACTISE THE METHODS OBSERVED BY ALL BUSINESS CONCERNS IN THIS MATTER, HE SAID AFTER CHAIRING THE WEEKLY CABINET MEETING THE AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT HERE.

HE SAID THIS WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE AUDITOR-GENERAL, TAN SRI AHMAD NOORDIN ZAKARIA'S REPORT THAT 83 SUCH AGENCIES AND COMPANIES LISTED AS OFF-BUDGET AGENCIES BY BANK NEGERA WERE NOT UNDER THE PURVIEW OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL/ALTHOUGH THERE WERE PROVISIONS IN THE AUDIT ACT, 1983.

AMONG SUCH AGENCIES WERE PERNAS, PETRONAS, SABAH GAS INDUSTRIES, MISC AND THE HEAVY INDUSTRIES CORPORATION OF MALAYSIA (HICOM).

--MORE 1613/AN

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MAHATHIR 2 KUALA LUMPUR

LAST YEAR THESE AGENCIES RECEIVED 96.7 BILLION FROM GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE TO FINANCE THEIR ACTIVITIES, TAN SRI AHMAD NOORDIN HAD STATED IN HIS REPORT,

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE ACCOUNTS OF SUCH AGENCIES WERE AUDITED BY PRIVATE FIRMS BECAUSE THEY WERE ALLOWED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO DO SO AFTER OBTAINING PERMISSION FROM THE AUDIT DEPARTMENT.

HE SAID THAT IF THERE WERE ANY IRREGULARITIES, IT WAS NOT BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT CONCERNED BUT BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN CAUSED BY THE NEGLIGENCE OF THOSE AGENCIES.

--BERNAMA 1614/AN