

MAHATHIR-VISIT

84 (P)
KUALA LUMPUR, AUG. 18 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TONIGHT HIS ATTENDING THE CHOGRM MEETING IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND HIS VISIT TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND HAVE HELPED TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND COUNTRIES OF THE REGION.

THE PRIME MINISTER, SPEAKING TO REPORTERS ON HIS RETURN AT THE KUALA LUMPUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, DESCRIBED HIS VISIT, PARTICULARLY TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, AS HAVING CONTRIBUTED TO STRENGTHENING RELATIONS IN THE FIELDS OF TRADE, INVESTMENT, EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AND DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH WERE RECEIVED BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK MUSA HITAM AND DATIN MARIA MUSA AND OTHER CABINET MINISTERS.

HE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND AGREED THERE WAS A NEED TO TAKE CORRECTIVE MEASURES TO CHECK THE UNFAVOURABLE TRADE BALANCE MALAYSIA HAD WITH THE TWO COUNTRIES.

ONE OF THE MEASURES EXPLORED WAS CONTRA-TRADING, HE ADDED. --
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+PERHAPS MALAYSIA COULD BUY COAL FROM AUSTRALIA IN EXCHANGE FOR OIL,+ HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON MEASURES TO REDUCE THE TRADE ON INVISIBLES, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: +WE HAD AGREED THAT THE CARRIAGE OF CERTAIN COMMODITIES WOULD BE IN THEIR SHIPS AND CERTAIN OTHERS IN MALAYSIAN LINERS OR IN SHIPS CHARTERED BY MALAYSIA.+

ON ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS BY STUDENTS DURING HIS STAY IN SYDNEY, HE SAID ONLY A SMALL GROUP OF NON-MALAYSIAN STUDENTS, WHO LOOKED LIKE CAUCASIANS WHEN THEY LATER REMOVED THEIR MASKS, WERE INVOLVED.

BUT, HE SAID, ANOTHER LARGE GROUP OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS HAD HELD A DEMONSTRATION AT THE SAME PLACE IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT.

MALAYSIAN STUDENTS HAD FURTHER SHOWN THEIR SUPPORT BY THEIR PRESENCE AT VARIOUS AIRPORTS DURING HIS ARRIVAL, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT ON HIS RETURN FLIGHT HE STOPPED OVER AT DARWIN AIRPORT WHERE HE RECEIVED, IN A TOKEN CEREMONY, A GIFT OF BUFFALOES FROM THE PREMIER OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

HE SAID THE 25 BUFFALOES, WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN SHIPPED HERE, WOULD BE USED FOR CROSS-BREEDING PURPOSES -- BERNAMA.