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MAHATHIR-VIDEO
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ALOR SETAR, NOV. 30 (BERNAMA) -- (P) PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY EXPRESSED REGRET OVER THE DISTRIBUTION OF A VIDEO TAPE SHOWING THE KEDAH MENTERI BESAR AT A DINNER SOME EIGHT MONTHS AGO, AND SAID THE MOVE WAS A SMEAR CAMPAIGN AGAINST UMNO LEADERS BY PAS.

RESPONDING TO REPORTERS' QUESTIONS ON THE MATTER? HE SAID THE TAPE WAS DISTRIBUTED BY A CERTAIN GROUP WHICH INCLUDED MEMBERS FROM PAS.

THE TAPE SHOWS THE MENTERI BESAR, DATUK SERI SYED NAHAR SHAHABUDDIN, IN MEXICAN ATTIRE, WITH SEVERAL STATE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS AT A PRIVATE DINNER AT THE MERLIN INN HERE LAST FEBRUARY

THE 40-MINUTE FILM, WHICH CAPTURED THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE DINNER AND DATUK SERI SYED NAHAR IN A SOMBRERO, HAS BEEN THE TALK OF THE TOWN IN KEDAH RECENTLY AND IS IN GREAT DEMAND IN KEDAH, PERLIS, PULAU PINANG AND PERAK. ITS DISTRIBUTION BEGAN IN SEPTEMBER.

AS FAR AS I KNOW, IT WAS JUST A DINNER, AND THEY DID NOT INDULGE IN ANY QUESTIONABLE ACTIVITIES AT THE DINNER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID. -- MORE
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AMONG THOSE AT THE DINNER WITH DATUK SERI SYED NAHAR WERE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS DATUK PADUKA OTHMANAROFF AND DATUK ZAINAL ABIDIN JOHARI AND KEDAH UMNO YOUTH LEADER HAJIZAKARIA SAID.

ASKED WHETHER THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE TAPE WAS A PAS TACTIC TO POISON THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE AGAINST UMNO LEADERS, THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO IS ALSO UMNO PRESIDENT, SAID: THAT (SMEAR CAMPAIGN) IS THE WORK OF PAS.

BERNAMA UNDERSTANDS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER REGRETTED THAT THE VIDEO FILM PORTRAYAL WAS PRECEDED BY PORNOGRAPHIC SCENES TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE KEDAH UMNO LEADERS ON TAPE WERE ALSO INVOLVED IN THESE SCENES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO MENTIONED PAS'S REQUEST TO UMNO TO ISSUE A CERTAIN STATEMENT ON ISLAM AND SAID THE INTENTION WAS NOT FOR ISLAMIC INTERESTS BUT TO DRIVE OUT THE 'NON-MUSLIMS FROM THE BARISANNASIONAL. -- BERNAMA
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