

U E776 AAE
 MAHATHIR-ISLAM
 B M

IPOH, DEC 24 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD HAS CALLED ON UMNO TO OPPOSE EFFORTS BY A CERTAIN GROUP TO DESTROY THE MALAY CULTURE.

THE GROUP, HE SAID, HAD ALLEGED THAT THE MALAY CULTURE CONTRADICTED ISLAM.

POINTING OUT THAT CULTURE REFLECTED THE IDENTITY AND ORIGIN OF AN INDIVIDUAL, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IT WAS THE DUTY OF UMNO MEMBERS TO COUNTER SUCH PROPAGANDA.

+WE (UMNO) HOLD TO THE MALAY RACE AND MALAY CULTURE BECAUSE WE ARE MALAYS AND HAVE A MALAY IDENTITY AND APPEARANCE. THEREFORE, WE MUST NOT FEEL ASHAMED OF BEING MALAYS,+ HE SAID WHEN SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON ORGANIZED BY THE KINTA UMNO DIVISION HERE TODAY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE UMNO STRUGGLE UPHELD NATIONALISM AND ISLAM ITSELF ENCOURAGED SUCH A SENTIMENT AS EXPLAINED IN THE HOLY QURAN.

+WE ARE MALAYS AND WE MUST NOT BE ASHAMED OF BEING MALAYS. RACE MEANS CULTURE AND IF THE CULTURE IS LOST, THE RACE TOO WILL BE LOST,+ SAID DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR IN REFUTING ALLEGATIONS BY AN OPPOSITION PARTY THAT THE SPIRIT OF NATIONALISM AS ENSHRINED IN THE UMNO CONSTITUTION WAS +ASSABIYAH.+ (CHAUVINISM).

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS UMNO PRESIDENT, ALSO SAID THE PEOPLE MUST NOT BE MISLED BY CERTAIN QUARTERS WHO THOUGHT CLOTHES MADE THE MAN AND THE CHOICE OF CLOTHES REFLECTED THE PIOUSNESS OF A MUSLIM.

+THE PIOUSNESS OF A MUSLIM IS BASED ON HIS TAKWA (ADHERENCE TO THE TEACHINGS OF ALLAH). IF WE WANT TO DRESS DIFFERENTLY, THEN IT IS OUR PROBLEM. DO NOT CONNECT ISLAM WITH CHOICE OF DRESSING SO MUCH SO THAT WE (MALAYS) CANNOT DRESS ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOMS OF OUR RACE,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT MALAYSIANS NO LONGER PRACTISED CULTURE HAVING ELEMENTS INCONSISTENT WITH ISLAM, LIKE NATURE RITES.

THE PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED REGRET THAT UMNO WHICH ADOPTED A MODERATE ATTITUDE WAS FORCED TO FACE CHALLENGES FROM WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS PRESENT-DAY EXTREMISTS, UNLIKE IN THE PAST, WHEN MUSLIMS WERE UNITED.

+MODERATE PEOPLE LIKE US WILL ALWAYS BE THREATENED BY THE EXTREMISTS. IF POSSIBLE, THEY WILL LIKE TO DESTROY US WITH THREATS AND BY MAKING ALL SORTS OF ACCUSATIONS TO CREATE A FEELING THAT WE TOO MUST BE EXTREMIST WITH THE EVENTUAL RESULT OF DESTRUCTION TO THE 'NATION'+ --BERNAMA

0074MOT 24 12 84

U B782 DEB