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MAHATHIR

EMBARGO: FOR RELEASE AT 8.30 PM.

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KUALA LUMPUR, DEC 26 (BERNAMA) --PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TONIGHT RATED TOURISM AS HAVING THE BEST POTENTIAL TO HELP REDUCE THE DEFICIT IN THE NATION'S SERVICE ACCOUNT.

SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY HERE, HE SAID MALAYSIANS SPENT \$2.1 BILLION ON TRAVEL AND EDUCATION ABROAD BUT THE COUNTRY EARNED ONLY HALF OF THAT AMOUNT FROM INWARD TOURISM.

+I WOULD RATE TOURISM AS HAVING THE BEST POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT AND EARLY RESULTS\*+ HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY SAVED MILLIONS OF RINGGIT BY CHANGING THE POLICY ON EDUCATION ABROAD AS WELL AS BY STIPULATING USE OF THE NATIONAL CARRIER (MAS) FOR ALL AIR TRAVEL.

HE REGRETTED THAT THE PEOPLE HAD DONE ALMOST NOTHING TO HELP THE GOVERNMENT IN THESE EFFORTS.

AS A RESULT NOT ONLY WAS MAS UNABLE TO GET MORE LANDING RIGHTS BUT FOREIGN AIRLINES WERE ALSO CONTINUING TO BYPASS MALAYSIA, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ADDED.

HE SAID: +WHILE THE WHOLE WORLD PRAISED OUR AIRLINES, MALAYSIANS CANNOT FIND CHARITY IN THEIR HEARTS FOR EVEN THE SMALLEST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF OUR SERVICE.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT THE COUNTRY COULD NOT AFFORD THE KIND OF ANTI-TOURIST LUXURY THAT SOME PEOPLE WERE ADVOCATING.

COMPARED WITH OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES, MALAYSIA WAS YET TO EXPLOIT FULLY ITS TOURIST POTENTIAL.

HE SAID THE PROMOTION OF TOURISM AS A MATTER OF NATIONAL PRIORITY WAS SET IN THE CONTEXT OF A BALANCED PROMOTION FOR DOMESTIC TRAVELLERS AS WELL AS THE ATTRACTION OF REGIONAL AND WORLDWIDE TOURISTS.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID: +WE MUST PRESERVE OUR NATURAL BEAUTY BUT WE CANNOT LIVE IN ATTAP HUTS SO THAT A FEW WONDERING HIPPIES COULD COMMUNE WITH NATURE.

+TO ATTRACT THE MONEYED WE NEED TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR COMFORT IN HOTELS AND TOURIST COMPLEXES AFTER THEY HAD THEIR FILL OF MALAYSIA'S NATURAL BEAUTY.+

HE HOWEVER ASSURED THAT THERE WOULD BE A BALANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST AMENITIES AND THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL BEAUTIES.

DATUK SERI OR MAHATHIR WHO IMPRESSED AT LENGTH THE URGENCY OF REDUCING THE NATION'S DEFICIT IN ITS **SERVICE ACCOUNT**, SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE HAD SPOKEN ON THE SAME TOPIC AT THE CHAMBER'S ANNUAL DINNER LAST YEAR, HE WONDERED IF ANY RESEARCH HAD BEEN DONE TO MEASURE THE RESPONSE OF ITS MEMBERS TO THE GOVERNMENT'S APPEAL.

**+THE IMPRESSION I GET IS THAT YOU HAVE NOT SHOWN MUCH URGENCY ON YOUR PART TO TACKLE THIS PROBLEM.....APPRECIATION OF THE PROBLEM WITHOUT ACTION IS WORTHLESS,+ HE ADDED.**

HE SAID IT WAS HIGH TIME THE CHAMBER SET PROGRAMMES AND MEASUREMENTS RELATING TO THE PROBLEM.

THEY SHOULD FIND OUT HOW MUCH OF THE COUNTRY'S **EXPORTS** WERE DEALT **ON C.I.F. (COST, INSURANCE, FREIGHT)** AND HOW MUCH ON **F.O.B. (FREE ON BOARD)** AND THE AMOUNT OF EXPORTS GOING THROUGH LOCAL SHIPS AND THE COST OF INSURANCE.

IT WOULD ALSO BE WORTH FINDING OUT HOW MUCH OF THE COUNTRY'S EXPORTS WERE BEING SOLD THROUGH THIRD COUNTRIES.

HE HAS BEEN **TOLD** THAT THESE COUNTRIES WERE SELLING **MALAYSIAN** EXPORTS CHEAPER THAN THE PRICE OFFERED BY LOCAL EXPORTERS.

**IF** IT WAS TRUE, THEN **+WE** MUST LEARN HOW THEY DO IT AND DO IT OURSELVES,+ HE ADDED.

THE GOVERNMENT WAS EVER READY TO COOPERATE WITH LOCAL EXPORTERS, BUT **+DO** NOT JUST SAY SUBSIDIZE OR GIVE US THE TAXES THAT YOU **COLLECT,+ HE SAID.**

DATUK **SERI DR MAHATHIR** SAID THE **LOCAL ECONOMY WAS** EXPECTED TO PERFORM WELL, BUT IT COULD BE AFFECTED BY THE IMPACT OF A LESS VIGOROUS ECONOMY IN EXTERNAL DEMAND BECAUSE THE OUTLOOK FOR THE WORLD **ECONOMY FOR 1985** WAS ONE OF MODERATE GROWTH ONLY. --BERNAMA.  
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