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MAHATHIR-PARLIAMENT
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KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 30 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TOLD MALAYSIANS TODAY THEY SHOULD NOT RESENT OR APOLOGISE FOR THE FACT THAT THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF THEIR COUNTRY DIFFERED FROM THOSE ELSEWHERE.

+OUR SYSTEM IS FOR OUR COUNTRY,+ THE PRIME MINISTER SAID WHEN LAUNCHING THE CELEBRATIONS TO MARK THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF PARLIAMENT AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

WHAT WAS IMPORTANT, HE SAID, WAS THAT THE SYSTEM BEING PRACTISED IN THE COUNTRY PROVIDED THE PEOPLE WITH THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE THE GOVERNMENT THEY WANTED AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT THEY VOTED INTO OFFICE HAD NO RIGHT TO GOVERN LIKE A DICTATOR.

HE SAID SOME COUNTRIES CONSIDERED THEMSELVES DEMOCRATIC WHEN IN FACT THEY WERE AUTOCRACIES WHILE OTHERS WERE SO DEMOCRATIC IN ACCEDING TO THE INTERESTS OF THE MINORITY THAT THE RIGHTS OF THE MAJORITY WERE IGNORED.

+THERE ARE NO IDEAL DEMOCRACIES IN THIS WORLD. ALL DEMOCRACIES, EAST OR WEST, IN ADVANCED OR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, HAVE FLAWS,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

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MAHATHIR-PARLIAMENT 2 KUALA LUMPUR

+WE IN MALAYSIA NEED NOT FEEL RESENTMENT OR BE APOLOGETIC FOR OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM WHICH DIFFERS FROM THOSE IN OTHER COUNTRIES,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE PEOPLE OUGHT TO FEEL PROUD THAT NO ONE COULD SAY ELECTIONS IN MALAYSIA WERE NOT FREE.

+ELECTIONS ARE FREE AND THE RULING PARTY HAS NEVER MADE A 100 PER CENT SWEEP. THE OPPOSITION WILL HAVE A PLACE. IF THEY ARE FEW IN NUMBER, THAT IS THE PEOPLE'S DECISION.+

HE ADDED: +MALAYSIA IS A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY PRACTISING A SYSTEM OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY AND WE ARE PROUD OF THIS SYSTEM.+

IN THIS CONNECTION, HE URGED MALAYSIAN STUDENTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN LOCAL AND OVERSEAS INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING, TO BEWARE OF CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO WERE BENT ON DISPARAGING THE COUNTRY'S SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD BEEN IN EXISTENCE SINCE INDEPENDENCE.

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MAHATHIR-PARLIAMENT 3 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR REMINDED STUDENTS THAT BECAUSE OF THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM THEY WERE GIVEN THE FREEDOM AND SUPPORT TO PURSUE KNOWLEDGE.

TO PEOPLE'S ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, HE SAID THEY SHOULD ALWAYS BE SENSITIVE TO THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE AND PUT THE PEOPLE'S INTERESTS BEFORE THEIR OWN.

+IN DISCHARGING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES, WE MUST BE FAIR-MINDED IN SERVING THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT IF THERE WAS ABUSE OF THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM TO THE DETRIMENT OF SOCIETY, THEN THE IDEA OF DEMOCRACY FOR THE SAKE OF DEMOCRACY MIGHT HAVE TO BE REVIEWED.

HE SAID IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT COMMUNIST PARTIES WERE OUTLAWED BECAUSE OF THEIR INTENTION TO USE DEMOCRACY TO SEIZE POWER AND HAVING ACHIEVED THIS TO DISMANTLE DEMOCRACY. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-PARLIAMENT 4 KUALA LUMPUR

+THE BANNING OF COMMUNIST PARTIES MAY BE UNDEMOCRATIC ON THE SURFACE BUT IT WAS DONE TO PRESERVE DEMOCRACY,+ HE SAID.

+SIMILARLY, OTHER MEASURES MAY AT A GLANCE SEEM TO GO AGAINST DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES BUT IN THE LONG TERM THEY ARE MEANT TO SAFEGUARD DEMOCRACY.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HOPED EVERYONE CONCERNED, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNGER GENERATION, WOULD COME TO REALIZE THAT THE SEEMINGLY RESTRICTIVE MEASURES TAKEN IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY LIKE MALAYSIA WERE AIMED AT ENSURING THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT BE TAKEN IN BY GROUPS THAT HAD A TENDENCY TO COMPARE FREEDOM IN MALAYSIA WITH THAT IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS HOWEVER HAPPY THAT THE SYSTEM OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY HAD BEEN ACCEPTED BY MALAYSIANS WHO HAD PLAYED THEIR ROLE TO BRING ABOUT NATIONAL STABILITY.

SUCH A SYSTEM, HE SAID, HAD ENABLED THE GOVERNMENT TO DRAW UP AND IMPLEMENT NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE PEOPLE'S WELLBEING.

+IT IS THEREFORE OUR JOINT RESPONSIBILITY TO WORK AT UPHOLDING THIS SYSTEM,+ HE SAID. -- BERNAMA
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