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MAHATHIR-RAILWAY 85
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TAIPING, JULY 18 (BERNAMA) -- A NEW EAST-WEST RAILWAY LINE IS BEING PLANNED FOR PENINSULAR MALAYSIA, CONNECTING CUKAI IN TERENGGANU WITH PORT KELANG IN SELANGOR, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD ANNOUNCED HERE TODAY.

THE LINE WOULD PASS THROUGH SEVERAL LARGE TOWNS IN PAHANG AND ALSO THE KUALA LUMPUR RAILWAY STATION, HE SAID WHEN LAUNCHING THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE MALAYAN RAILWAY AT THE RAILWAY STATION HERE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE EAST-WEST LINE WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE OF THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT TAKING PLACE IN THE EAST COAST OF THE PENINSULA FOLLOWING THE DISCOVERY OF OIL, AND TO SERVE AS A LINK TO KUANTAN PORT.

HE ALSO SAID THAT PART OF THE EAST-WEST LINE PROJECT WOULD BE PRIVATISED TO REDUCE THE BURDEN THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE BORNE BY THE GOVERNMENT. -- MORE

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THE RAILWAY STATIONS IN THE PAHANG TOWNS THROUGH WHICH THE LINE WOULD PASS WOULD BE LARGE AS LARGE AS THE KUALA LUMPUR STATION AND HAVE RESTAURANTS, SHOPPING ARCADES AND A HOTEL.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE TRACKS WOULD RUN BELOW THESE STATIONS AND NOT ALONGSIDE AS IN EXISTING STATIONS IN OTHER TOWNS.

HE SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE NEW LINE WOULD ENCOURAGE THE GROWTH OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN THE TOWNS ALONG THE ROUTE.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO TOUCHED ON SEVERAL MODERNISATION PROGRAMMES OF THE MALAYAN RAILWAY THAT WERE IN THE PIPELINE, INCLUDING THE USE OF ELECTRIC TRAINS.

HE SAID THE USE OF ELECTRIC TRAINS IN PLACE OF THE DIESEL-POWERED ONES WAS INEVITABLE IN FACE OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS THAT WERE TAKING PLACE. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-RAILWAY 3 TAIPING

HE SAID MALAYSIA WAS RICH IN HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER AND GAS WHICH COULD BE EXPLOITED FOR USE BY THE ELECTRIC TRAINS.

IT WOULD ALSO BE PROPER THAT THE DIESEL-POWERED LOCOMOTIVE BE REPLACED TO CHECK AIR POLLUTION, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID LACK OF FINANCE WAS WHAT HAMPERED THE MODERNISATION PROGRAMME OF THE MALAYAN RAILWAY, BUT THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NEGLECTING ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE MALAYAN RAILWAY BECAUSE THE RAILWAY WAS THE BEST MEANS OF TRANSPORT FOR ALL THE PEOPLE.

THE PRIME MINISTER CRITICISED MALAYAN RAILWAY FOR HAVING GIVEN LESS PRIORITY TO ADVERTISEMENTS TO SEEK WIDE PUBLICITY FOR ITS SERVICES AND ATTRACT MORE PASSENGERS.

HE WENT ON TO CITE HOW THE MALAYSIAN AIRLINE SYSTEM (MAS) USED ADVERTISEMENTS TO DRAW PASSENGERS, SO MUCH SO THAT ONE OF THE ADVERTISEMENTS HAD BEEN ADJUDGED THE BEST ON TELEVISION. -- MORE
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U E044 AAE MAHATHIR-RAILWAY 4 TAIPING

ADVERTISEMENTS ARE A GOOD INVESTMENT TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PASSENGERS, HE SAID AND ADDED THAT HE HAD LONG WAITED TO SEE WIDELY CIRCULATED MALAYAN RAILWAY ADVERTISEMENTS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID A DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF A PACIFIC ISLAND NATION WHO VISITED MALAYSIA RECENTLY HAD ASKED WHETHER MALAYSIA HAD RAILWAYS, AND THAT THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY THAT MORE PEOPLE WERE UNAWARE OF THE MALAYAN RAILWAY SERVICES.

HE ADVISED PASSENGERS TO TAKE CARE OF THE FACILITIES PROVIDED BY MALAYAN RAILWAY, AND THOSE LIVING ALONG RAILWAY LINES TO ENSURE THAT STONES WERE NOT THROWN AT PASSING TRAINS.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE CEREMONY WERE DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR'S WIFE, DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH ALI, MENTERI BESAR DATUK SERI RAMLI NGAH TALIB AND TRANSPORT MINISTER TAN SRI CHONG HON NYAN.
-- BERNAMA