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MAHATHIR-ARCHITECTS

85 (P)
KUALA LUMPUR, AUG 7 (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD HAS URGED ARCHITECTS TO CREATE A NEW CHARACTER FOR THE COUNTRY'S CITIES BY ACCENTUATING THE UNIQUENESS OF MALAYSIAN ARCHITECTURE.

+WE MUST PRESERVE SOME OF THE OLD SHOP-HOUSES TO REMIND US OF OUR OLD CHARACTER. BUT THERE IS NOTHING TO PREVENT US FROM CREATING A NEW CHARACTER FOR MALAYSIAN CITIES.+ THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.

SINCE MALAYSIAN ARCHITECTURE ALREADY HAD ITS DIFFERENCE, EMPHASIZING THE UNIQUENESS WOULD GIVE THE COUNTRY'S ARCHITECTURE CHARACTER OF HER OWN, HE SAID AT THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE MALAYSIAN ARCHITECTS ASSOCIATION HERE TONIGHT WHERE HE WAS CONFERRED AN HONOURARY MEMBERSHIP BY THE ASSOCIATION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT FIVE-FOOT WAYS OF OLD SHOP-HOUSES WHICH SERVED AS GOOD SHELTER FROM THE LOCAL CLIMATE AND THE UNIQUENESS OF MALAYSIAN BUILDING PERHAPS COULD BE REPLACED BY COVERED WALKS OR SHADY AVENUES AS FREE-STANDING BUILDINGS OCCUPY THE CITIES LANDSCAPE. -- MORE
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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION AS MUCH AS IT WAS CONCERNED TO SEE THAT EVERY LAND OWNER GOT THE WEALTH THAT WAS DUE TO HIM IN ALLOWING THE CONSTRUCTION OF HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS.

THE GOVERNMENT LATELY, HE SAID, HAD BEEN LOOKING INTO THE EFFECTS OF RAPID DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITIES OF MALAYSIA AS MORE AND MORE GLASS TOWERS WERE BEING BUILT TO KEEP OUT THE HEAT THUS LOWERING THE COST OF COOLING THE INTERIORS.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, CHANCES WERE THAT THE HEAT KEPT OUT WAS HEATING UP THE STREETS AND THE OPEN SPACES, MAKING WALKING ABOUT OR EVEN DRIVING LESS COMFORTABLE AND THE GOVERNMENT SUSPECTED THAT HEAT ISLANDS WERE BEING FORMED IN CERTAIN LOCATIONS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE SHORT ANSWER TO THIS PROBLEM WAS TO BAN THE USE OF REFLECTING GLASS AS EXTERIORS OF BUILDINGS.

BUT THERE WERE OTHER ANSWERS TO THE PROBLEM TOO LIKE PLANTING OF MORE TREES AND GREENS TO PROVIDE COOL SHADE WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO DO AS A SHORT TERM MEASURE, HE SAID. -- MORE
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HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT AGENCY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON HOW TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEM OF HEAT IN THE CITIES.

IN THE MEANTIME, HE URGED ARCHITECTS AND LANDSCAPE ARTISTS TO GIVE ATTENTION AND SUPPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT'S TREE-PLANTING AND LANDSCAPING EFFORT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO WARNED OF THE DANGER OF OVER-BUILDING WHICH HE SAID WOULD ONLY RESULT IN DIFFICULTIES IN REPAYING LOANS BY THE BUILDERS.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT WANT TO SEE ANYONE INCUR LOSSES BECAUSE IT WOULD HURT THE ECONOMY AND THE REVENUES OF THE GOVERNMENT.

HE EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS BECAUSE OF THIS THAT THE GOVERNMENT TRIED TO LIMIT LOANS FOR BUILDING CONSTRUCTION. -- BERNAMA
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