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MAHATHIR-UNDERSTANDING

KUCHING, AUG 24⁸⁵ (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY STRESSED THAT THE EXISTING UNDERSTANDING, COOPERATION AND HARMONY AMONG THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE COUNTRY SHOULD BE MAINTAINED BECAUSE THESE FACTORS ARE MOST VITAL FOR THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT.

WITHOUT SUCH A CORDIAL AND HARMONIOUS ATMOSPHERE, WHATEVER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS PLANNED FOR THE PEOPLE COULD NOT BRING BENEFIT, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE SIZE OF THE PROJECTS.

HE CITED THE \$560 MILLION BATANG AI HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER PROJECT IN SARAWAK, WHICH COULD REDUCE THE COST OF POWER SUPPLY IN THE STATE, AS ONE OF THOSE PROJECTS THAT WOULD HAVE A FAR-REACHING EFFECT ON THE PRESENT AND FUTURE PROGRESS OF THE STATE, CURRENTLY UNDERGOING VIGOROUS DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP.

SPEAKING TO NEWSMEN AT THE KUCHING INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BEFORE RETURNING TO KUALA LUMPUR AT THE END OF HIS FIVE-DAY VISIT TO SARAWAK, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR REMINDED THE PEOPLE TO BE WARY OF CERTAIN GROUPS AND PARTIES WHICH WERE OUT TO ROUSE RACIAL SENTIMENTS AMONG THEM.

THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD SUCH GROUPS THAT THEIR ACTIONS WOULD ONLY HARM THE COUNTRY AND HAMPER ITS DEVELOPMENT. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-UNDERSTANDING 2 KUCHING

ON HIS VISIT, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR EXPRESSED HIS DEEP SATISFACTION WITH THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS ACHIEVED UNDER CHIEF MINISTER DATUK PATINGGI HAJI ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD AND HIS CONCEPT OF POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT AND SAID HE HAD FULL CONFIDENCE IN DATUK PATINGGI TAIB'S LEADERSHIP AND HIS ABILITY TO DEVELOP THE STATE.

DURING HIS FIVE-DAY VISIT, THE PRIME MINISTER OFFICIATED THE OPENING OF THE \$560 MILLION BATANG AI PROJECT, THE \$100 MILLION WISMA SABERKAS (SARAWAK NATIONAL UNITED YOUTH ASSOCIATION BUILDING), THE \$70 MILLION HOLIDAY INN EXTENSION AND THE PACIFIC TRUCKS ASSEMBLY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HIT OUT AT ELEMENTS TRYING TO MISLEAD THE PEOPLE BY BELITTLING THE GOVERNMENT'S DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR THEIR OWN SELFISH AIMS.

ON THE CUEPACS THREAT TO WITHDRAW SUPPORT FOR THE BARISAN NASIONAL GOVERNMENT, HE SAID IT WAS THE PREROGATIVE OF THE RAKYAT TO CHOOSE WHOM THEY FELT COULD BEST AND MOST EFFECTIVELY LEAD THEM BUT HE REMINDED CIVIL SERVANTS THAT THEY WERE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN POLITICS.

+HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BOW TO ANY PRESSURE BY ANY GROUP TO SWERVE FROM ITS DECISIONS WHICH INVOLVE THE FUTURE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL AND NOT ONLY CERTAIN GROUPS,+ HE SAID. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-UNDERSTANDING 3 KUCHING

AS SUCH, IT WAS NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO GIVE IN TO THREATS AND SO-CALLED CAUSES SINCE THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE INTERESTS OF OTHER GROUPS AND THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE.

+WE DO NOT WANT TO START AN UNHEALTHY PRECEDENT AS THE GOVERNMENT CAN ILL-AFFORD TO DIVERT DEVELOPMENT FUNDS, FOR WHICH IT NOW DEPENDS MOSTLY FROM TAXES, JUST TO CATER FOR ONE GROUP AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHER GROUPS WHICH MIGHT JUST FOLLOW SUIT AND ALSO HAMPER DEVELOPMENT PLANS,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS WIFE, DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH, WERE GIVEN A TRADITIONAL SEND-OFF BY HUNDREDS OF BN SUPPORTERS AND MEMBERS, LOCAL DIGNITARIES AND LEADERS LED BY DATUK PATINGGI HAJI ABDUL TAIB AND FEDERAL MINISTER OF CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS, DATUK DR SULAIMAN HAJI DAUD.

LAST NIGHT, DURING THE KING EDWARD'S COLLEGE OF MEDICINE CLASS OF 1947 REUNION DINNER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR RECEIVED A \$1.2 MILLION +CATSCAN+ MACHINE DONATED BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT AND HANDED OVER BY DATUK PATINGGI HAJI ABDUL TAIB. -- BERNAMA
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