

85 (P)
 KUALA LUMPUR, OCT 22 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THE GOVERNMENT APPRECIATED THE DECISION OF CUEPACS AND THE NATIONAL JOINT COUNCILS (STAFF SIDE) TO CALL OFF THEIR NATIONWIDE PICKET SCHEDULED FOR TOMMORROW.

ASKED IF HE WAS HOPEFUL A SETTLEMENT WOULD BE REACHED ON THE INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE WITH GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES OVER WAGE CLAIMS, HE WOULD ONLY SAY: +THE GOVERNMENT IS ALWAYS HOPEFUL.+

ON WHEN HE WOULD HOLD TALKS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF CUEPACS AND THE NJCS (STAFF SIDE), HE TOLD REPORTERS AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE: +ANYTIME WHEN I AM FREE.+

THE TWO BODIES REPRESENTING GOVERNMENT WORKERS ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT THEY WERE CALLING OFF THE NATIONWIDE PICKET AFTER RECEIVING AN OFFICIAL LETTER THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WAS PREPARED TO MEET THEM FOR TALKS ON THEIR CLAIMS.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK MUSA HITAM SAID HE WAS OBVIOUSLY HAPPY FOR WHAT HE CONSIDERED TO BE THE SECOND STEP IN THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM.

THE FIRST STEP, HE ADDED, WAS HIS STATEMENT ON OCT 14 WHICH CALLED FOR A +COOLING OFF PERIOD.+ -- MORE

CUEPACS-MAHATHIR 2 KUALA LUMPUR

+NOW WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE TALKS AND MEETING WHICH I AM SURE WILL BE WITH GOODWILL AND SINCERITY AS WELL AS WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF BOTH PARTIES (GOVERNMENT AND UNIONS) TO SEE INDUSTRIAL PEACE AND STABILITY, YET ENSURING THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS IN THE COUNTRY, AND THIS WILL BRING SUCCESS FOR THIS THIRD AND FINAL STEP,+ HE ADDED.

HE FELT THAT THE FINAL STEP WOULD LEAD TO CUEPACS CALLING OFF THE SCHEDULED STRIKE ON JAN 15 BASED ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT HE BELIEVED WOULD BE ACHIEVED DURING THE TALKS.

+GOODWILL AND SINCERITY OBVIOUSLY EXIST, ESPECIALLY AFTER MY CALL FOR BOTH PARTIES TO TONE DOWN THEIR STATEMENTS, INCLUDING THOSE OF LEADERS OF TRADE UNIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES,+ DATUK MUSA ADDED.

HE DID NOT WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE FORM OF THE SETTLEMENT THAT COULD LIKELY BE REACHED BECAUSE +SPECULATION WOULD ONLY ADD TO MORE SPECULATIONS THAT WOULD CREATE UNNECESSARY MISPERCEPTION FOR ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.+

+I ATTRIBUTE THE PRESENT SUCCESS TO THE RESTRAINT SHOWN BY ALL PARTIES. TO ME THIS ELEMENT OF RESTRAINT IS CRUCIAL,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

CUEPACS-MAHATHIR 3 KUALA LUMPUR

UMNO VICE-PRESIDENT DATUK ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO NOTE THE GOVERNMENT AND CUEPACS WISHED TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEM THROUGH THE +MUSYAWARAH+ (CONSENSUS) SPIRIT.

HE SAID THAT WHEN FACING SUCH A SITUATION, THERE NEEDED TO BE A +CALM+ ATTITUDE.

DATUK ABDULLAH, WHO IS EDUCATION MINISTER, DESCRIBED AS VERY FITTING THE MOVE TO CALL OF THE PICKET.

WANITA UMNO CHIEF DATIN PADUKA RAFIDAH AZIZ SAID ALL QUARTERS INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE SHOULD LOOK AT IT IN A RATIONAL AND CALM MANNER AND TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION NATIONAL INTERESTS.

SHE SAID WANITA UMNO WELCOMED THE MOVE BY CUEPACS TO CALL OFF THE PICKET.

THIS ATTITUDE SHOWED IT HAD PLACED THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE NATION ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE.

+AND THIS APPROACH SHOULD BE FOLLOWED UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT IS ABLE TO MEET THE PAY CLAIMS,+ SAID DATIN PADUKA RAFIDAH, WHO IS PUBLIC ENTERPRISES MINISTER. -- BERNAMA