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MAHATHIR-ORANGES  
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KUALA LUMPUR, FEB 25 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY HE DID NOT WANT A RECURRENCE OF THE BOYCOTT OF MANDARIN ORANGES THAT TOOK PLACE DURING THE RECENT CHINESE NEW YEAR FESTIVE SEASON.

HE ALSO SAID HE BELIEVED THE CHINESE WOULD BUY THE ORANGES FROM ANY COMMUNITY AND NOT ONLY FROM MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN COMMUNITY.

+OUR NATION AIMS TO PRACTISE TOLERANCE AND NOT CHAUVINISM IN COMMERCE,+ HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE TAWAKAL SPECIALISTS' CENTRE IN JALAN PAHANG HERE.

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS COMMENTING ON THE CONTROVERSY THAT FOLLOWED THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO GIVE APPROVED PERMITS FOR DIRECT IMPORT OF THE ORANGES FROM CHINA TO ONLY TWO COMPANIES, ONE OF THEM BEING SATRIA UTARA.

THE GOVERNMENT NO LONGER ALLOWS TRADITIONAL IMPORTERS OF MANDARIN ORANGES TO IMPORT THE FRUIT FROM THIRD COUNTRIES LIKE SINGAPORE OR HONG KONG. -- MORE  
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MAHATHIR-ORANGES 2 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT WANT ANY FIELD OF BUSINESS TO BE MONOPOLISED BY ONE COMMUNITY ONLY BECAUSE THIS WOULD RESULT IN PROBLEMS IN A COUNTRY WHERE RACIAL SENTIMENTS STILL EXISTED.

+WE DO NOT WANT A SITUATION WHERE MEMBERS OF ONE COMMUNITY SERVE ONLY THE NEEDS OF THE SAME COMMUNITY. WE ARE A NATION OF VARIOUS COMMUNITIES AND SHOULD SERVE ONE ANOTHER'S NEEDS.

+FOR HARI RAYA (PUASA) OR DEEPAVALI, WE FIND MALAYS OR INDIANS BUYING CLOTHES AT ALL SHOPS AND NOT BOTHERED BY WHO SELLS THE COMMODITY,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HOPED RACIAL ISSUES WOULD NOT CROP UP AT ALL IN SUCH MATTERS SO THAT THERE WOULD BE GOODWILL AND THE COUNTRY WOULD BE MORE PEACEFUL. -- BERNAMA

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