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MAHATHIR-OPPOSITION

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KANGAR, MARCH 15 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID MALAYSIA NEEDS A HEALTHY OPPOSITION BUT THE EXISTING OPPOSITION IS MORE INCLINED TOWARDS COMMUNALISM AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID LAST NIGHT THAT AN OPPOSITION WAS NECESSARY IN A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY BECAUSE WITHOUT IT, THE RULING PARTY MIGHT BE CARELESS IN PERFORMING ITS DUTIES.

ADDRESSING BARISAN NASIONAL LEADERS AT RUMAH TETAMU HERE, HE HOWEVER SAID THAT AN OPPOSITION WAS NEEDED NOT TO JUST FIND FAULT WITH THE GOVERNMENT BUT TO HELP IT FIND SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS.

+WHAT IS REGRETTED IT THAT THE OPPOSITION NOW IS EITHER TOO COMMUNAL OR RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST,+ HE SAID.

+THE DAP, FOR EXAMPLE, USE COMMUNAL ISSUES TO ATTRACT THE PEOPLE TO SUPPORT IT AND DOES NOT BOTHER ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF ITS COMMUNALISTIC ATTITUDE.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS, HOWEVER, HAPPY THAT ONLY A SMALL PROPORTION OF THE PEOPLE SUPPORTED THE DAP. -- MORE
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HE SAID ANOTHER PARTY, WHICH HE DID NOT NAME, WAS QUICK IN MAKING VARIOUS ACCUSATIONS LIKE CALLING OTHER MUSLIMS INDIFELS AND MAKING OTHER UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS.

+THAT PARTY HAS TOLD FOREIGN NEWSPAPERS THAT THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT OUTLAWS ISLAMIC GROUPS.

+THE PARTY IS WILLING TO LIE SO LONG AS IT GETS ATTENTION,+ HE ADDED.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE ATTITUDE AND ACTS OF SUCH OPPOSITION PARTIES ONLY BROUGHT HARM TO THE COUNTRY AND RELIGION.

HE ADVISED THE BARISAN NASIONAL COMPONENT PARTIES TO BE PREPARED TO WARD OFF ANY ATTACK BY THE OPPOSITION ON ANY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT POLICIES.

TO THE OPPOSITION PARTIES HE SAID THEY PLAY THEIR ROLE PROPERLY BY SHOWING THE GOVERNMENT WAYS TO OVERCOME ITS WEAKNESSES, IF ANY.

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HE SAID THE COUNTRY WAS NOW ENJOYING UNITY AND HARMONY BECAUSE OF THE TOLERANT ATTITUDE OF ITS LEADERS AND PEOPLE.

THE COUNTRY SHOULD BE PROUD OF THIS AND HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT SO LONG AS THE PEOPLE EXERCISED THEIR RIGHTS PROPERLY AND WISELY, SUCH A SITUATION WOULD CONTINUE TO PREVAIL.

MENTERI BESAR DATUK HAJI ALI HAJI AHMAD WAS PRESENT.

TODAY DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AND DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH LEAVE FOR PULAU PINANG.--BERNAMA
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