

0112

U 8756 DEE
MAHATHIR-RACIAL
BM

85

KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 24 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY HE DOES NOT WISH TO SEE ANYONE, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF BARICAN NASIONAL COMPONENT PARTIES, MAKING STATEMENTS THAT CAN GIVE RISE TO RACIAL AND CHAUVINISTIC ISSUES.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID PROBLEMS RELATING TO RACE AND RELIGION MUST BE RESOLVED THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS AND NOT THROUGH STATEMENTS AND COUNTER STATEMENTS WHICH COULD SPARK RACIAL ISSUES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR IMPARTED HIS MESSAGE AT THE BN SUPREME COUNCIL MEETING HERE. THE TWO-AND-A-HALF-HOUR MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY THREE REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH OF THE 18 BN COMPONENT PARTIES.

HE TOLD REPORTERS LATER THAT THE MEETING VIEWED WITH GRAVE CONCERN THE TREND TOWARD CHAUVINISTIC, RACIAL AND EXTREMIST ISSUES.

+WE HAVE DETERMINED THE ROLE THAT THE BN NEEDS TO PLAY IN CHECKING SUCH TRENDS,+ HE SAID. -- MORE
1547MST 24 03 85

0119

U 8759 DEE
MAHATHIR-RACIAL 2 KUALA LUMPUR.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE ALSO IMPRESSED UPON THEM THE NEED FOR ALL BN COMPONENT PARTIES TO MAKE EXTRA EFFORTS IN COMBATING THE RACIALISTIC TRENDS.

THE REPRESENTATIVES HAD GIVEN AN ASSURANCE THAT THEY WOULD EXTEND THEIR UTMOST COOPERATION, HE SAID.

HE ALSO SAID THAT, OBVIOUSLY, IT WAS POSSIBLE TO PROVOKE CERTAIN LEADERS INTO MAKING STATEMENTS THAT WERE RACIALISTIC IN NATURE.

+BUT STATEMENTS ARE OF NO CONSEQUENCE IF THEY ARE NOT GIVEN WIDE PUBLICITY. IF AN ISSUE IS PUBLISHED IN A NATIONAL NEWSPAPER, THEN IT BECOMES A NATIONAL PROBLEM,+ HE ADDED.

IN THIS REGARD, THE PRIME MINISTER BLAMED CERTAIN NEWSPAPERS WHICH HE SAID PURPOSELY SIMULATED OUT CERTAIN MATTERS WHICH WERE THEN MADE INTO RACIAL ISSUES.

HE ALSO CHIDED OPPOSITION PARTIES WHICH HE SAID WERE NOT COMMITTED TOWARD RACIAL INTEGRATION AND CARED ONLY ABOUT THEIR OWN PARTICULAR RACE.

-- MORE
1600MST 24 03 85

0120

U 8764 DEE
MAHATHIR-RACIAL 3 KUALA LUMPUR

+THEY HAVE NO COMPUNCTION AND NO SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY WHEN IT COMES TO PLAYING UP RACIAL ISSUES.+

ASKED WHETHER BN COMPONENT PARTIES WERE ALSO GUILTY OF PROPAGATING RACIAL ISSUES, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR REPLIED: UNCONSCIOUSLY, OF COURSE, SOME BN PARTIES, IN TRYING TO DEFEND THEMSELVES, ARE TRAPPED INTO MAKING STATEMENTS WHICH MIGHT BE VIEWED AS RACIALISTIC IN NATURE.

HE STRESSED THAT IT WAS NOT THE WISH OF THE BN TO CONTRIBUTE TO RACIALISM BUT BECAUSE THE OPPOSITION MADE AN ISSUE OF IT, THE BN HAD TO SAY SOMETHING WHICH SOME QUARTERS MADE TO APPEAR AS TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO RACIALISM IN THE COUNTRY.

HE REMINDED THE PEOPLE THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF OPPOSITION PARTIES OF FORCING BN COALITION MEMBERS INTO MAKING WHAT APPEARED TO BE RACIALISTIC, CHAUNINISTIC AND EXTREMIST STATEMENTS WAS TO CREATE DISSENSION WITHIN THE BN.

+IF THERE IS DISSENSION OR LACK OF UNITY WITHIN THE BN, THEN THE CHANCES OF THE BN GETTING THE SUPPORT OF ALL COMMUNITIES WOULD BE LESSEMED AND THE OPPOSITION WILL THINK THAT THEY HAVE GREATER HOPES OF WINNING OVER THE PEOPLE. -- MORE

1427MST 24 03 85

0132

U E765 DEE
MAHATHIR-RACIAL 4 KUALA LUMPUR

DURING THE HALF-HOUR PRESS CONFERENCE, THE PRIME MINISTER DWELT AT LENGTH ON THE DOINGS OF THE PRESS WHICH HE SAID HAD RESULTED IN THE RACIALISTIC TRENDS IN THE COUNTRY.

+CERTAIN NEWSPAPERS ARE THE MAJOR CULPRITS, REALLY,+ HE SAID WITHOUT IDENTIFYING THE NEWSPAPERS CONCERNED.

HE SAID IT WAS LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE PRESS THAT GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TOWARD GREATER RACIAL UNITY HAD BEEN MADE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT.

+THERE IS NO WAY A STATEMENT MADE BY SOME UNKNOWN CHAP IN SOME CORNER OF THE COUNTRY CAN AFFECT THE THINKING OF OTHER PEOPLE IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY IF THE NEWSPAPERS DO NOT PLAY IT UP,+ HE ADDED.

HE REGRETTED THAT NEWSPAPERS, IN THEIR QUEST TO BOOST SALES, THRIVED ON MAKING ORDINARY MATTERS INTO RACIAL ISSUES AND CITED THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE NATIONAL CAR, THE PROTON SAGA, AS AN EXAMPLE. -- MORE

1632MST 24 03 85

D133

U E766 DEE
MAHATHIR-RACIAL 5 KUALA LUMPUR

OTHER MATTERS WHICH DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SINGLED OUT AS HAVING BEING MADE INTO ISSUES BY CERTAIN NEWSPAPERS WERE BUKIT CHINA, PAPAN AND THE IMPORT OF MANDARIN ORANGES.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE BUKIT CHINA ISSUE, FOR EXAMPLE, SHOULD HAVE BEEN CONFINED ONLY TO THE PEOPLE IN MELAKA, BUT INSTEAD IT WAS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AS A RESULT OF THE REPORTS CARRIED BY NEWSPAPERS. -- BERNAMA

1633MST 24 03 85