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U E108 AAE
MAHATHIR R'R'R'

KUALA LUMPUR, MAY 22/ (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TONIGHT HIT OUT AT THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL FOR ITS ARTICLE ALLEGING THE +INVOLVEMENT+ OF FINANCE MINISTER ENCIK DAIM ZAINUDIN OVER THE PURCHASE OF SHARES OF THE UNITED MALAYAN BANKING CORPORATION (UMBC).

+I READ THE ARTICLE AND IT LOOKS LIKE A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO BLACKEN THE NAME OF MALAYSIA,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER VISITING THE STAGE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL QURAN READING COMPETITION AT THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE HERE.

HE SAID THE ARTICLE WAS NOT CORRECT AND IT WAS TYPICAL OF THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL +NEVER TO PRINT FACTS RIGHT+. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR 2 KUALA LUMPUR R'R'R'

ON WHETHER THE ATTEMPT WAS ALSO DIRECTED AT HIM, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: +OBVIOUSLY YOU CAN'T HIT AT MY CABINET WITHOUT HITTING AT ME AS WELL. I'M IN THE LINE OF FIRE.+

THE JOURNAL IN ITS APRIL 30 EDITION CLAIMED THERE HAD BEEN A MINGLING OF ENCIK DAIM'S PUBLIC ROLE AND PRIVATE BUSINESS INTERESTS, AND REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO ENCIK DAIM GAINING A MAJOR STAKE IN UMBC A WEEK BEFORE HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE CABINET IN 1984. THE PAPER ALSO ALLEGED THAT IN MID-1985 ENCIK DAIM'S FAMILY COMPANIES TOOK MAJORITY CONTROL OF THE BANK.

ON THE CABINET'S APPROVAL OF THE UMBC DEAL, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IF THE DEAL HAD BEEN MADE BEFORE ENCIK DAIM BECAME FINANCE MINISTER THEN HE WOULD HAVE APPROVED, BUT BECAUSE IT WAS AFTER, IT HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE CABINET.

ON THE JOURNAL'S REPORT, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IT WAS OBVIOUSLY DIRECTED AGAINST MALAYSIA AND THE GOVERNMENT. -- MORE
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ASKED WHAT ACTION COULD BE TAKEN ABOUT THE ARTICLE, HE REPLIED: +WHAT CAN I DO? THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO PUBLISH, I SUPPOSE TO PUBLISH LIES.+

ASKED TO COMMENT ON WHICH PARTS OF THE ARTICLE WERE WRONG, HE SAID: +IF IT IS NOT CORRECT THEN IT MUST BE LIES.+

ON THE ARTICLE'S CLAIM THAT IT WAS NOT KNOWN WHO HAD ACTUALLY APPROVED THE DEAL, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: +I AM QUITE SURE IF THEY (THE JOURNAL) KNOW SO MUCH, THEY WOULD HAVE KNOWN EVERYTHING BUT THE ONE FACT THAT CLARIFIES THE PICTURE WAS PURPOSELY NOT PUT IN.

+LIES BY OMMISION IS LIES BY COMMISSION.+ -- BERNAMA
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