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B E901 AAE
MAHATHIR-FIRMS

BM

KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 6 (BERNAMA) -- THE CABINET DECISION TO EXTEND ASSISTANCE TO FIRMS THAT HAVE FALLEN ON BAD TIMES IS NOT MEANT TO HELP THE WEALTHY BUT TO SAFEGUARD THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, SAID TODAY.

SAYING THAT SUCH COMPANIES HAD LARGE NUMBERS OF WORKERS, HE ADDED THAT MANY OF THE EMPLOYEES WOULD LOSE THEIR JOBS IF THE FIRMS RECEIVED NO HELP WITH PROBLEMS BROUGHT ON BY THE RECESSION.

IF THIS HAPPENED, THE WORKERS WOULD BECOME THE GOVERNMENT'S PROBLEM, HE SAID. +AS SUCH, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO HELP COMPANIES FACING DIFFICULTIES, NOT FOR THE SAKE OF PEOPLE WHO ARE RICH BUT IN THE INTEREST OF THEIR WORKERS.+

HE SAID THAT ONCE THESE COMPANIES STARTED MAKING PROFITS AGAIN, A PERCENTAGE WOULD GO TO GOVERNMENT COFFERS TO BE SPENT, AMONG OTHER THINGS, ON SALARIES OF ITS EMPLOYEES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS COMMENTING ON CLAIMS THAT THE CABINET DECISION, MADE AT ITS WEEKLY MEETING LAST WEEK, WOULD BENEFIT PEOPLE WHO WERE ALREADY WEALTHY. -- BERNAMA

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