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MAHATHIR-COMPANIES
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KOTA KINABALU, JULY 7 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE THE PRESENT 18 TO 21 PERCENT BUMIPUTERA EQUITY PARTICIPATION IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT SET UP ANY COMPANIES OR CORPORATIONS.

OPENING THE KOTA KINABALU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT NEW TERMINAL HERE THIS EVENING, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID ONLY THROUGH THE SETTING UP OF SUCH CORPORATIONS AND COMPANIES COULD THE GOVERNMENT INCREASE BUMIPUTERA ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION.

+THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO SPEND TO DEVELOP THE COUNTRY IN THE INTEREST OF ALL THE PEOPLE,+ HE SAID.

HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SEVERAL SUCH COMPANIES AND CORPORATIONS HAD FAILED AND INCURRED LOSSES BECAUSE OF BAD MANAGEMENT AND THE MALPRACTICES OF THOSE ENTRUSTED WITH THEIR MANAGEMENT. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-COMPANIES 2 KOTA KINABALU

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN MEASURES TO PUT THE COMPANIES BACK ON SOUND ECONOMIC FOOTING AND ACTION HAD BEEN TAKEN AGAINST THOSE WHO HAD ABUSED THEIR POSITION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE REGRETTED THE ACCUSATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT SPENT A LOT OF MONEY ONLY TO HELP BUMIPUTERAS.

+THEY MUST REMEMBER THAT PULAU PINANG DOES NOT HAVE A BIG BUMIPUTERA POPULATION BUT THE GOVERNMENT SPENT MORE THAN \$1,000 MILLION TO BUILD THE PENANG BRIDGE.+

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALSO INVESTED MORE THAN \$185 MILLION TO BUILD THE KOTA KINABALU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT INCLUDING THE \$50 MILLION TERMINAL THOUGH THIS DID NOT REPRESENT A COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT.

HE SAID SUCH INVESTMENT WAS DONE BECAUSE IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S DUTY AND WAS NOT AIMED AT STRIVING FOR PROFITS.

REFERRING TO THE FERI MALAYSIA SERVICE, HE SAID IT WAS BEING INTRODUCED TO BRING THE PEOPLE IN THE PENINSULA, SARAWAK AND SABAH CLOSER TOGETHER. -- MORE
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U E902 DEE
MAHATHIR-COMPANIES 3 KOTA KINABALU

HE SAID THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WAS SPENDING \$5 MILLION A YEAR IN THE FORM OF AN ANNUAL GRANT TO ASSIST FERI MALAYSIA.

+THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING THIS BECAUSE FERI MALAYSIA WILL NOT MAKE PROFITS FROM THE FARES. BUT THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO SPEND THE MONEY IN THE INTEREST OF COMMUNICATION FACILITIES FOR THE PEOPLE IN THE PENINSULA AND SABAH AND SARAWAK.+

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO JUST CLOSE DOWN UNPROFITABLE COMPANIES AND CORPORATIONS WITHOUT REALISING THAT ABOUT 200,000 WERE BEING EMPLOYED BY THEM.

+IF SUCH COMPANIES ARE CLOSED DOWN WHO IS GOING TO GIVE THEM EMPLOYMENT? WOULD THOSE WHO MAKE SUCH CALLS DO SO? + HE ASKED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT WAS EASY TO SPEAK ABOUT GOVERNMENT LOSSES WHEN THE CRITICS DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE FACTS. -- MORE
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U E903 DEE
MAHATHIR-COMPANIES 4 KOTA KINABALU

+IF THEY ARE CAPABLE OF SOLVING THE PROBLEMS THEN THEY SHOULD BE PREPARED TO GIVE EMPLOYMENT TO THOSE THROWN OUT OF THEIR JOBS.+
THEY WERE SPEAKING WITHOUT THINKING AND JUST WANTED TO CRITICISE AND DISCREDIT THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID.

+THERE IS NO GOVERNMENT IN THE WORLD WHICH DOES SOMETHING WITHOUT A LITTLE MISTAKE. IN THE UNITED STATES THIS YEAR, 86 BANKS BECAME BANKRUPT BECAUSE OF THE RECESSION BUT THIS NEWS DOES NOT ATTRACT OUR ATTENTION.+

THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO BEAR CERTAIN COSTS AND SUCH ACTION WAS A NOBLE ONE ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID.

ANOTHER FACTOR FOR HIGH COSTS WAS BECAUSE IN MALAYSIA THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (PWD) SET HIGH STANDARDS FOR PROJECTS -- FAR HIGHER THAN OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, HE SAID.

HE SAID AIRPORT TERMINAL BUILDINGS IN MALAYSIA WERE OF A HIGHER STANDARD THAN THOSE IN CERTAIN OTHER COUNTRIES.

HE HOPED THE PEOPLE WOULD MAKE GOOD USE OF THE AIRPORT AND TREAT IT AS THEIR OWN BECAUSE IT WAS BUILT WITH THEIR MONEY. -- BERNAMA
2144MST 07 07 86