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MAHATHIR-PANEL
BM

KUALA LUMPUR, NOV 16 (BERNAMA) -- THE BARISAN NASIONAL WILL CONSIDER THE PROPOSAL OF MCA PRESIDENT DATUK DR LING LIONG SIK THAT A SPECIAL PANEL BE SET UP TO RE-EXAMINE RACE RELATIONS IN THE COUNTRY.

PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, WHO IS ALSO BN CHAIRMAN, SAID THE PROPOSAL, MADE DURING DATUK DR LING'S ADDRESS IN THE MCA GENERAL ASSEMBLY HERE TODAY, WAS A GOOD ONE.

THE JURISDICTION OF THE PANEL MUST BE THOUGHT OUT, HE TOLD REPORTERS WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE PROPOSAL TO SET UP THE PANEL TO, AMONG OTHERS, EVOLVE STRATEGIES TO ENSURE SENSITIVE ISSUES WERE NOT EXPLOITED BY +IRRESPONSIBLE POLITICIANS.+

ON THE RECENT UMNO-MCA DISPUTE OVER THE +PRIBUMI+ (INDIGENOUS) ISSUE, HE DESCRIBED THE DISAGREEMENT AS AN ORDINARY DEVELOPMENT THAT HAD BEEN RESOLVED WITH SENSIBLE THINKING ON THE PART OF LEADERS OF BOTH SIDES.

ON THE GROUP OF 46 UMNO MPS WHO WANTED LABOUR MINISTER AND SELANGOR MCA CHAIRMAN DATUK LEE KIM SAI TO BE DROPPED FROM THE CABINET OVER THE ISSUE, HE SAID HE BELIEVED THEY WERE NOW HAPPY WITH THE RESOLUTION OF THE MATTER.

HE ALSO EXPLAINED THAT THE GOVERNMENT TOOK TIME TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE BECAUSE IT DID NOT WANT TO BE REGARDED AS PRESSURING ANY PARTY AND BECAUSE IT WANTED TO ALLOW THE PEOPLE TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES THE ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH ISSUES. -- MORE
1639MST 16 11 86

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MAHATHIR-PANEL 2 KUALA LUMPUR

MEANWHILE, BN SECRETARY-GENERAL GHAFAR BABA WHO ATTENDED THE OPENING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DESCRIBED THE PROPOSAL AS A +GOOD IDEA+, ADDING THAT IT WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT BN SUPRME COUNCIL MEETING.

+ANYTHING FOR THE GOOD OF THE COUNTRY IS ALWAYS WELCOME. WE MUST THINK SERIOUSLY OF THIS IDEA AND DISCUSS IT AMONG THE COMPONENT PARTIES,+ SAID ENCIK GHAFAR WHO IS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER.

GERAKAN PRESIDENT DATUK DR LIM KENG YAIK, IN SUPPORTING THE SUGGESTION, FELT, HOWEVER, THAT THE PANEL SHOULD BE A GOVERNMENT-INSTITUTED INDEPENDENT BODY COMPRISING REPRESENTIVES FROM BN COMPONENT PARTIES AND THE INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (ISIS) AND ACADEMICIANS.

+THE GERAKAN IN FACT HAD MADE A SIMILAR PROPOSAL 10 YEARS AGO FOR THE SETTING UP OF AN INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL UNITY. I HOPE ALL PARTIES WILL SIT DOWN AND CRYSTALLISE THE IDEA BECAUSE IT IS HIGH TIME SUCH A PANEL IS FORMED,+ HE ADDED. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-PANEL 3 KUALA LUMPUR

IN WELCOMING THE IDEA, MIC DEPUTY PRESIDENT DATUK S.SUBRAMANIAM SAID THAT WITH SUCH A PANEL, CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES COULD BE RESOLVED WITHIN THE BN AND NOT COME OUT IN THE OPEN.

+THE BN BASCIALLY HAS THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF UNITY AMONG ALL RACES,+ HE SAID.

SARAWAK UNITED PEOPLE'S PARTY (SUPP) PRESIDENT DATUK AMAR STEPHEN YONG SAID BN LEADERS SHOULD HAVE MORE DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE COALITION TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN RELATIONS AMONG THE COMPONENT PARTIES.

HE ALSO FELT THE PROPOSED PANEL WOULD BE A GOOD APPROACH IN SETTTLING SENSITIVE ISSUES.

PARTI PESAKA BUMIPUTERA BERSATU SARAWAK VICE-PRESIDENT HAJI BUJANG ULIS SAID: +THE SUGGESTION REMINDS US OF THE FUNDAMENTAL THINGS WE SHOULD UPHOLD TO IF WE WANT A UNITED MALAYSIA.+ -- BERNAMA
1703MST 16 11 86