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MAHATHIR-OSA R'R'R'

MELAKA, NOV 21 (BERNAMA) -- THE OFFICIAL SECRETS (AMENDMENT) BILL WILL NOT BE REFERRED TO A PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

+I DON'T SEE THE NECESSITY,+ HE SAID IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM REPORTERS AFTER A THREE-HOUR MEETING WITH MELAKA UMNO LEADERS AT SERI BENDAHARA, THE CHIEF MINISTER'S OFFICIAL RESIDENCE, HERE.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE BILL BEING WITHDRAWN OR FURTHER MODIFICATIONS MADE TO IT.

+IT SHOULD BE LEFT AS IT IS,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY LISTENED TO THE VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE AND MADE MODIFICATIONS TO THE OSA.

THE BILL, HE SAID, WAS PRESENTED AT THE LAST PARLIAMENT MEETING BEFORE THE AUGUST ELECTION.

+SINCE THEN IT HAS BEEN MODIFIED AS PROMISED,+ HE SAID, ADDING THAT DESPITE ALL THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS STILL LISTENING TO WHAT THE PEOPLE WERE SAYING. -- MORE

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+BUT WE FEEL SURE THAT WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE A LAW THAT IS NECESSARY FOR THE NEEDS OF OUR COUNTRY,+ HE SAID.

ON THOSE OPPOSING THE BILL, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: +IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THESE PEOPLE ARE OPPOSED TO IT NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO.+

HE FELT THEY HAD NOT BOTHERED TO STUDY IT PROPERLY OR ASKED FOR AN EXPLANATION ABOUT THE PARTS OF THE BILL WHICH BOTHERED THEM.

WHEN TOLD THAT SOME OF THOSE OPPOSING THE OSA ALSO INCLUDED UMNO MEMBERS, HE SAID: +MAYBE IN UMNO ALSO WE HAVE PEOPLE WHO DID NOT STUDY (THE BILL).+

ON UMNO SPREADING ITS WINGS TO SABAH, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS UMNO PRESIDENT, SAID THE PARTY WAS MONITORING THE SITUATION IN THE STATE BEFORE COMMITTING ITSELF.

HE SAID THE TASK HAD BEEN ENTRUSTED TO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND UMNO VICE-PRESIDENT GHAFAR BABA. -- MORE

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID HE HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY REPORT ABOUT THE PURPORTED COOPERATION BETWEEN GERAKAN AND PARTI BERSATU SABAH (PBS).

+I ONLY READ (ABOUT IT) FROM THE NEWSPAPERS. SO I CAN'T COMMENT AS YET,+ HE SAID.

ON THE PRESENT ECONOMIC SITUATION, HE SAID THERE WERE SIGNS OF A SLIGHT RECOVERY FOLLOWING THE INCREASE IN PRICES OF OIL PALM AND TIN.

BUT, HE ADDED, THIS COULD NOT BE LOOKED ON AS AN INDICATOR OF A PROLONGED ECONOMIC RECOVERY FOR THE COUNTRY.

ON THE PROPOSED PICKET BY THE MALAYSIAN TRADES UNION CONGRESS (MTUC) ON DEC 1 OVER THE GOVERNMENT-SUGGESTED THREE-YEAR MORATORIUM ON WAGE INCREASE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: +WE ARE JUST ADVISING THE PEOPLE TO HAVE A THREE-YEAR WAGE FREEZE FOR THE GOOD OF EVERYBODY.

+I'M JUST INTERESTED IN SEEING THE ECONOMY RECOVER.+ -- BERNAMA

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