

MAHATHIR-BOYCOTT
BM

IPOH, MARCH 13 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ENCOURAGE ANY BOYCOTT OF SHOPKEEPERS AND BUSINESSMEN WHO IGNORE THE REQUEST OF THE AUTHORITIES TO LOWER THE PRICES OF SPECIFIC GOODS, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TONIGHT.

HE SAID A BOYCOTT WOULD CAUSE THE TRADERS TO FEEL PRESSURED AND THIS WOULD GIVE RISE TO OTHER IMPLICATIONS LIKE THE GOODS +DISAPPEARING+ FROM THE SHELVES AND THE SHOP WORKERS FACING OTHER CONSEQUENCES.

SPEAKING AT A COMMUNITY DINNER AT THE RESIDENCE OF THE MENTERI BESAR HERE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT WANTED THE SHOPKEEPERS AND THE TRADERS TO LOWER THEIR PRICES VOLUNTARILY WHEN THE COST OF PRODUCTION OF THE ITEMS DROPPED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR INDICATED THE GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO SEE A REDUCTION IN THE PRICES OF DAILY ESSENTIALS OTHER THAN THOSE ANNOUNCED RECENTLY IN VIEW OF THE DROP IN PRODUCTION COSTS OF THESE GOODS.

THIS, HE SAID, WAS TO LIGHTEN THE PEOPLE'S BURDEN IN FACE OF THE PROLONGED ECONOMIC RECESSION. -- MORE
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THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO TOUCHED ON LOSSES DUE TO THE HIGH PRODUCTION COST OF PALM OIL AT \$550 A TONNE WHEN THE PRICE OF THE COMMODITY HAD DROPPED TO \$420 A TONNE.

THIS HE SAID, MEANT A LOSS OF \$130 PER TONNE WHEN THE PRODUCTION COST IN OTHER PRODUCING COUNTRIES WAS ONLY BETWEEN \$350 AND \$390 A TONNE.

HE SAID THE CAUSES FOR THE HIGH PRODUCTION COST INCLUDED MANAGEMENT INEFFICIENCY IN HANDLING THE PRODUCTION.

HE ADDED THAT THIS WAS STRESSED BY THE GOVERNMENT WHEN IT INTRODUCED THE +LOOK EAST POLICY+ TO ADOPT QUALITIES LIKE EFFICIENCY, DILIGENCE AND INCREASE IN PRODUCTIVITY WHICH COULD BE LEARNT FROM THE JAPANESE AND KOREANS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO TOUCHED ON UNITY AMONG THE RACES, SAYING THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NEVER DENIED THAT THERE WAS A SLIGHT MISUNDERSTANDING AMONG THE RACES ON SEVERAL MATTERS. -- MORE
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+BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NEVER TRIED TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEM THROUGH FORCE= ONLY THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS. THIS IS MALAYSIA'S UNIQUENESS THAT MUST BE MAINTAINED TO ENSURE STABILITY IN EVERY ASPECT,+ HE ADDED.

HE DENIED THAT THERE WAS DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW VILLAGES, ADDING THAT VARIOUS PROGRAMMES WERE BEING DRAWN UP TO CONTINUE DEVELOPING THE NEW VILLAGES.

HE URGED THOSE WHO HAD MADE THE ALLEGATIONS TO COMPARE THE TREATMENT THEY HAD RECEIVED EARLIER AND THE DEVELOPMENT NOW TO SEE THE PROOF THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT NEGLECTED THEM.

OVER 2,500 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE DINNER TO WELCOME DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AND HIS WIFE, DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH MOHAMAD ALI TO THE STATE.

PRESENT WERE MENTERI BESAR DATUK SERI RAMLI NGAH TALIB, STATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, POLITICAL LEADERS, MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS AND UMNO SECRETARY-GENERAL DATUK SERI SANUSI JUNID. --
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