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B E092 AAE
PAIRIN

KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 17 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THE SITUATION PREVAILING IN SABAH IS A POLITICAL PROBLEM AND MUST BE SOLVED POLITICALLY.

HE SAID THIS IN A MEETING WITH SABAH CHIEF MINISTER DATUK JOSEPH PAIRIN KITINGAN WHO CALLED ON THE PRIME MINISTER TO BRIEF HIM ON EVENTS THAT HAD BEEN TAKING PLACE IN THE STATE.

DATUK PAIRIN TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO ACCEPTED THAT HOLDING AN ELECTION WAS ONE OF THE WAYS TO EASE THE SITUATION.

+I --ASSURED HIM OF OUR INTENTION TO SOLVE THE SITUATION POLITICALLY, INDICATING THE REASON WHY THE MATTER SHOULD BE SOLVED THROUGH ELECTIONS,+ HE SAID.

DATUK PAIRIN SAID HE SUBMITTED A MEMORANDUM TO THE PRIME MINISTER ON +WHAT I KNOW OF THE EVENTS IN SABAH.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, ACCORDING TO DATUK PAIRIN, SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE SITUATION THERE AND ASSURED HIM THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD NO INTENTION OF IMPOSING EMERGENCY RULE THERE +AS THE POLICE CAN HANDLE THE SITUATION.+

+THE PRIME MINISTER ASSURED US OF FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY AS FAR AS THE SECURITY OF THE STATE IS CONCERNED,+ SAID DATUK PAIRIN, ADDING THAT HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE HOUR-LONG MEETING. -- MORE

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PAIRIN 2 --KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO URGED THE STATE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE IN THE STATE TO REMAIN CALM AND TO COOPERATE WITH THE AUTHORITIES.

DATUK PAIRIN ASSURED THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THE PEOPLE IN THE STATE HAD RESPONDED WELL UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES TO CALLS BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT FOR THEM TO REMAIN CALM.

THE CHIEF MINISTER ALSO PRESENTED TO DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR FACTS PERTAINING TO SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS AND THE FILLING OF POSITIONS AND MATTERS PERTAINING TO TRANSFERS WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE TO COUNTER ALLEGATIONS BY USNO AND BERJAYA AGAINST THE PBS THAT IT WAS ANTI-ISLAM AND THAT MUSLIMS WERE BEING THREATENED IN SABAH.

DATUK PAIRIN TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THESE ALLEGATIONS WERE BASELESS, UNTRUE AND MALICIOUSLY FABRICATED.

HE ALSO SAID IT WAS NOT TRUE THAT PBS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SMEARING OF THE STATE MOSQUE AS ALLEGED.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE ALLEGATION ANYWAY. -- MORE

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B E100 AAE
PAIRIN 3 KUALA LUMPUR

ON PBS' APPLICATION TO JOIN THE BN, DATUK PAIRIN SAID HE WAS TOLD THAT THE MATTER WAS BEING CONSIDERED.

DATUK PAIRIN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MEMBERSHIP IN THE BN WAS ONE WAY TO STABILISE THE SITUATION.

AS TO WHETHER HE WAS DISSAPPOINTED THAT A DECISION HAD YET TO BE TAKEN ON THE APPLICATION, HE SAID +WE HAVE TO CONSIDER AND UNDERSTAND THE MAKE-UP OF THE BN.+

+THEREFORE IT IS A MATTER THAT I PATIENTLY AWAIT CONCLUSION.+

ON FOREIGNERS PARTICIPATING IN DEMONSTRATIONS IN KOTA KINABALU, DATUK PAIRIN SAID THOUGH HE COULD NOT SAY THE EXTENT OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT, HE HAD HOWEVER COMMUNICATED THIS POINT.

THE POLICE WOULD BE TAKING ACTION.

HE SAID THAT KNOWING HOW THE FEDERAL LEADERS THOUGHT ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, +WE FEEL THE SAME AND THEREFORE THE MATTER WHICH IS SOMETHING SERIOUS ENOUGH TO WARRANT THE ATTENTION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST LOOKED AT FROM THE SAME LIGHT.+

DATUK PAIRIN ALSO SAID THAT THEY DID NOT DISCUSS IN ANY DETAIL AS FAR AS LINKING THE BOMBINGS TO ANY PARTICULAR POLITICAL PARTY.

+IT IS A MATTER OF TIME TO PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER TO FIND OUT WHAT EXACTLY ARE THE FACTS SURROUNDING THE BOMBINGS.+ -- MORE
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B E102 AAE
PAIRIN 4 KUALA LUMPUR

THE CHIEF MINISTER PRAISED THE POLICE, SAYING THAT THEY HAD SO FAR HANDLED THE SITUATION WELL CONSIDERING ITS DELICATE NATURE.

+FROM WHAT WE HAVE SEEN ALTHOUGH SOME PEOPLE MAY HAVE SAID THE POLICE HAVE BEEN A BIT SLOW BUT VEIWING THE SITUATION AS A WHOLE AND UNDERSTANDING THE DELICATE NATURE OF THE SITUATION I WOULD SAY THAT THE POLICE HAVE HANDLED THE MATTER RATHER WELL,+ DATUK PAIRIN SAID.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE WERE PBS DEPUTY PRESIDENT HAJI WAHID OTHMAN AND FORMER FEDERAL MINISTER DATUK GHANI GILONG WHO SWITCHED FROM USNO TO PBS LAST YEAR. -- BERNAMA
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