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MAHATHIR-PEACE
BM

LABUAN, APRIL 18 (BERNAMA) -- DESPITE THE MANY DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES FOUND IN MALAYSIA, THE PEOPLE HAVE MANAGED TO CO-EXIST PEACEFULLY WITH ONE ANOTHER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

ACCORDING TO THE PRIME MINISTER, THIS WAS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES HAVING A SIMILAR PLURAL SOCIETY.

+IF WE STUDY THESE COUNTRIES, WE CAN SEE THE VARIOUS PROBLEMS THAT HAD CROPPED UP, SOMETIMES TO THE EXTENT OF CREATING INTERRACIAL WARFARE,+ HE ADDED WHEN LAUNCHING A PROJECT TO UPGRADE THE ROAD NETWORK OF LABUAN HERE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THIS SITUATION AROSE BECAUSE EACH COMMUNITY CARED ONLY FOR ITS OWN INTERESTS AND IGNORED THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS.

+BECAUSE ONE COMMUNITY TRIED TO CONTROL THE SITUATION TO ONLY ITS OWN ADVANTAGE, THE OTHER COMMUNITIES WOULD OPPOSE THE EFFORT,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

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SUCH A SITUATION DID NOT OCCUR IN MALAYSIA BECAUSE IN THE BARISAN NASIONAL GOVERNMENT NO COMMUNITY WAS UNREPRESENTED, HE SAID. EVERY COMMUNITY COULD VOICE ITS VIEWS AND ONLY THOSE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL WERE IMPLEMENTED, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WERE RACIAL RIOTS IN 1969 BUT SAID THAT THEY WERE CONFINED TO KUALA LUMPUR AND WERE CONTAINED WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD.

AFTER THIS, THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO COOPERATE WITH ONE ANOTHER AND SO OPPOSITION PARTIES SUCH AS THE GERAKAN, THE PPP, PAS AND SNAP JOINED THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID.

SUCH COOPERATION HAD LED TO RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY BENEFITING ALL THE COMMUNITIES, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID. -- MORE
(END OF CORRECTED RPTN)

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+WE WISH TO MAINTAIN SUCH COOPERATION THROUGH THE BARISAN NASIONAL AND ENSURE PEACE IN THE COUNTRY,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WANTED THE PEOPLE TO HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO EARN A LIVING BASED ON THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL ABILITIES.

ON LABUAN, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM TO TURN IT INTO A CENTRE OF EDUCATION AND TOURISM.

HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAMMES IN THIS DIRECTION HAD BEEN HAMPERED BY FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR INVITED THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO INVEST IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WHICH COULD PREPARE STUDENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION OVERSEAS.

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SUCH INSTITUTIONS WOULD ENABLE STUDENTS SEEKING ADMISSION INTO FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES TO STUDY LOCALLY FOR TWO YEARS BEFORE GOING OVERSEAS, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID LABUAN'S FREE PORT STATUS WOULD BE MAINTAINED TO ASSIST THE LOCAL RESIDENTS AND BOOST LOCAL TRADE AND COMMERCE.

SPEAKING AT THE FUNCTION, DEPUTY FEDERAL TERRITORY MINISTER AHMAD SHAH TAMBAKAU SAID THE PROJECT INVOLVED 64.4KM OF ROADS AND COST \$96 MILLION.

OF THE AMOUNT, \$41 MILLION CAME FROM THE SABAH GOVERNMENT AND THE REST FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

ALSO PRESENT WERE DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH, FEDERAL TERRITORY MINISTRY SECRETARY-GENERAL DATUK DR ELYAS OMAR, FORMER SABAH CHIEF MINISTER DATUK HARRIS SALLEH AND FORMER SABAH ASSEMBLY SPEAKER TAN SRI MOHAMED SUNOH MARSO. -- BERNAMA
1508MST 18 04 86