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MAHATHIR-LIBERAL
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KUCHING, JULY 29 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THAT UNDER THE LIBERAL ATTITUDE OF THE BARISAN NASIONAL GOVERNMENT EVERYONE, AND NOT ONLY THE OPPOSITION, CAN CRITICISE THE GOVERNMENT.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE BN COMPONENT PARTY MEMBERS WERE ALSO FREE TO MAKE CRITICISMS AND THUS HELP RESOLVE PROBLEMS FACING THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES THEY REPRESENTED.

HE ALSO SAID THE BN MADE EFFORTS TO BRING DEVELOPMENT TO ALL THE PEOPLE, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR ETHNIC BACKGROUND.

HOWEVER, IT WAS VITAL FOR THE COUNTRY TO HAVE A STRONG GOVERNMENT WHICH COULD CONCENTRATE ON DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS, HE ADDED WHEN OPENING THE 50-KM SIMUNJAN-BUKIT PUNDA ROAD IN SIMUNJAN, ABOUT 100KM FROM HERE.

HE SAID THAT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE STRONG AND STABLE, IT NEEDED A TWO-THIRD MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT.

THIS WAS ALSO NECESSARY TO ENSURE POLITICAL STABILITY IN THE NATION, HE ADDED. -- MORE
2155MST 29 07 86

U E172 AAE
MAHATHIR-LIBERAL 2 KUCHING

THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH, ARRIVED HERE THIS AFTERNOON FOR A BRIEF VISIT TO SARAWAK.

HE SAID COUNTRIES WITH WEAK GOVERNMENTS WERE UNABLE TO CONCENTRATE ON DEVELOPMENT OUT OF FEAR OVER LOSING ITS POPULARITY FOR UNDERTAKING CERTAIN MEASURES.

HE ADDED THAT THE BN, AND THE ALLIANCE BEFORE IT, WERE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES FOR THE PEOPLE'S BENEFIT WITHOUT BEING TOO CONCERNED OVER ITS POPULARITY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE BN WAS A COALITION WHICH TRULY REPRESENTED ALL THE RACES IN THE COUNTRY AND NO OTHER PARTY COULD TAKE ITS PLACE.

HE ALSO SAID EVERY STATE, INCLUDING SARAWAK, WERE GIVEN HUGE ALLOCATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY HAD A LARGE OR SMALL POPULATION. -- MORE
2157MST 29 07 86

U E177 AAE
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HE SAID IT COULD NOT BE DENIED THAT SARAWAK'S DEVELOPMENT WAS MORE RAPID SINCE THE STATE JOINED MALAYSIA 23 YEARS AGO COMPARED WITH THE TIME WHEN IT WAS UNDER COLONIAL RULE.

THE PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE BN WOULD OBTAIN A CONVINCING VICTORY IN THE GENERAL ELECTION AND PERHAPS EVEN SWEEP ALL THE 24 SEATS IN THE STATE.

HE URGED THE PEOPLE OF SARAWAK TO GIVE THEIR FULL SUPPORT TO THE BN CANDIDATES IN THE STATE, SAYING MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FROM SARAWAK WOULD HELP SAFEGUARD THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS BN CHAIRMAN, SAID THE BN AND UMNO DID NOT SUPPORT ANY INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE CONTESTING IN THE STATE.

HE ALSO ADVISED THOSE HAVING PERSONAL DIFFERENCES WITH CHIEF MINISTER DATUK PATINGGI HAJI ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD NOT TO DRAG THE MATTER INTO THE STATE'S POLITICAL ARENA.

HE SAID THOSE WHO HAD RETIRED FROM POLITICS SHOULD NOT CREATE ANY PROBLEMS BUT SHOULD RESPECT THE NEW LEADERS WHO HAD THEIR OWN WAY OF ADMINISTERING THE STATE. -- BERNAMA
2214MST 29 07 86