

B E761 AAE

MAHATHIR-COMMENT R R R R R R R R R R

BM

KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 25 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD WHO RETAINED HIS UMNO PRESIDENCY TONIGHT ASKED PARTY MEMBERS TO CLOSE RANKS ONCE MORE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE MALAY RACE, RELIGION AND COUNTRY.

HE SAID HIS PRIMARY TASK AFTER THE THREE-DAY PARTY GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH ENDS SUNDAY WAS TO SEE TO THE SMOOTH AND PROPER RUNNING OF PARTY ADMINISTRATION AND THE NATION.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AT HIS OFFICIAL RESIDENCE SERI PERDANA, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WAS HAPPY THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL ELECTIONS WERE CONDUCTED SMOOTHLY AND WITHOUT ANY UPTOWARD INCIDENT.

-- MORE

0044MST 25 04 87

B E763 AAE

MAHATHIR-COMMENT 2 KUALA LUMPUR R R R R R R R R R R

+I FIND THAT THE DELEGATES ARE MATURE AND HAD DISCHARGED THEIR DUTY IN THE PROPER MANNER,+ HE SAID.

ASKED WHETHER HIS VICTORY WAS ANTICIPATED, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE HAD EXPECTED TO WIN AND DID NOT CONSIDER THE NARROW MARGIN A +SETBACK.+

+WASN'T THE MAJORITY MORE THAN ONE VOTE?+ HE ASKED, SAYING THE SLIM MAJORITY HAD +NO CONSEQUENCE+ TO HIS LEADERSHIP.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HAD BEATEN TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER TENGKU RAZALEIGH HAMZAH BY 43 VOTES, POLLING 761 VOTES TO HIS CHALLENGER'S 718.

ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A CABINET RESHUFFLE BEING IN THE OFFING FOLLOWING THE SUPREME COUNCIL ELECTIONS, HE SAID THIS MATTER DID NOT ARISE AT PRESENT.

HOWEVER, HE MIGHT THINK ABOUT IT LATER.

ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD HAVE A MEETING WITH THE GROUP OPPOSING HIM IN THE COUNCIL ELECTIONS, HE SAID HE HAD PLENTY OF TIME TO SEE THEM.

HE SAID THAT IF HE WISHED TO GIVE ANY ADVICE TO THE GROUP, HE WOULD DO THIS ONLY ON A PERSONAL BASIS. -- MORE

0100MST 25 04 87

B E764 AAE

MAHATHIR-COMMENT 3 KUALA LUMPUR R R R R R R R R R R

COMMENTING ON THE VICTORY OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER GHAFAR BABA, WHO TOPPLED DATUK MUBA HITAM FOR THE UMNO DEPUTY PRESIDENT POST, ALSO BY A SMALL MAJORITY, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: +WE ACTED AS A TEAM.+

+I HAD EXPECTED ENCIK GHAFAR TO WIN,+ HE ADDED.

TO A QUESTION OF WHETHER HE WOULD GO ON A WITCH-HUNT AFTER THE UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WHICH WILL BE OVER ON SUNDAY, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR PARRIED THIS WITH ANOTHER QUESTION: +ARE WE DOING ANY SUCH THING NOW?+

ON WHETHER TENGKU RAZALEIGH WOULD BE DROPPED FROM THE CABINET, HE ONLY REPLIED: +BE PATIENT.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THE DELEGATES HAD MADE THEIR OWN CHOICE WHEN ELECTING EDUCATION MINISTER ANWAR IBRAHIM, TERENGGANU MENTERI BESAR DATUK SERI HAJI WAN MOKHTAR AHMAD AND DEFENCE MINISTER DATUK ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI AS VICE-PRESIDENTS. DATUK SERI HAJI WAN MOKHTAR AND DATUK ABDULLAH WERE THE INCUMBENTS.

-- BERNAMA

0110MST 25 04 87