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MAHATHIR-PRESS

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EMBARGO: FOR RELEASE AFTER 11PM TODAY (SEPT 19)

KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 19 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR TONIGHT REJECTED THE THEORY THAT THE MASS MEDIA SHOULD ADOPT A CONFRONTATIONAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVE ITS CREDIBILITY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID CLOSE AND CORDIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MEDIA WOULD NOT NECESSARILY RESULT IN THE MEDIA'S LOSS OF CREDIBILITY.

SPEAKING AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL MALAYSIAN PRESS AWARDS AT THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE HERE, HE WARNED THERE WERE +CERTAIN QUARTERS+ OUT TO ERODE THE EXISTING CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MASS MEDIA IN THE COUNTRY.

+THERE ARE SOME GROUPS UNHAPPY WITH OUR COOPERATION AND WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL,+ HE ADDED.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE MASS MEDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT HAD SUCCEEDED IN FORGING GREATER COOPERATION WHICH SHOULD BE FURTHER ENHANCED. -- MORE

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HE SAID THE COOPERATION DID NOT MEAN THE MASS MEDIA SHOULD NOT AND COULD NOT CRITICISE THE GOVERNMENT.

+THE GOVERNMENT IN ACTUAL FACT ENCOURAGES CRITICISM AND THIS IS OFTEN MADE AS EVIDENCED BY WHAT WE READ IN THE NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS.+

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID CRITICISMS SHOULD BE WELL-FOUNDED, CONSTRUCTIVE AND SINCERE AND MADE WITH GOOD INTENTION TO IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING AND UNITY.

HE REMINDED THE MASS MEDIA THAT IT WAS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR PRESERVING PEACE AND HARMONY IN THE COUNTRY.

THIS WAS A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY BUT THE MASS MEDIA IN MALAYSIA HAD SHOULDERED AND DISCHARGED THIS RESPONSIBILITY EFFECTIVELY.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT ALWAYS MADE EFFORTS TO ENHANCE UNITY AND STABILITY SO THAT SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COULD CONTINUE TO BE STEPPED UP. -- MORE

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EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE BY THE MASS MEDIA TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE AS +THIS IS A RESPONSIBILITY THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED.+

THE PRIME MINISTER ASKED THE MASS MEDIA TO WORK TOGETHER WITH THE GOVERNMENT TO CREATE A MORE PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY.

IN THIS CONNECTION, IT WAS VITAL FOR THE MASS MEDIA .TO ENSURE PRESS REPORTS DID NOT BRING ABOUT NEGATIVE EFFECTS.

THIS WAS BECAUSE IF UNDERSTANDING AND UNITY WERE THREATENED, PUBLIC ORDER AND SECURITY WOULD BE AFFECTED AND OVERCOMING THIS SITUATION AND OTHER ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES WOULD REQUIRE A LOT OF TIME AND MANPOWER, HE CAUTIONED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR PRAISED THE MASS MEDIA FOR COMPLEMENTING GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO BRING PROGRESS TO THE COUNTRY AND PEOPLE. -- MORE

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+ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE IN THE MASS MEDIA WHO HAVE A DIFFERENT ATTITUDE BUT THE MASS MEDIA IN THE COUNTRY ON THE WHOLE HAS PROVEN ITS SINCERITY AND INTEGRITY IN DISCHARGING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES.

+THE MASS MEDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT HAVE SUCCEEDED IN FORGING A LEVEL OF COOPERATION OF WHICH WE CAN ALL BE PROUD. IT HAS BENEFITTED NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS,+ HE SAID.

POINTING OUT THAT JOURNALISTS PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN SHAPING PUBLIC OPINION AND EXPANDING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID REPORTS IN THE NEWSPAPERS READ EVERY DAY BY THE PEOPLE INFLUENCED THEIR THINKING AND OPINION. -- BERNAMA

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