

D922

B E311 AAE
MAHATHIR-LANGUAGE

BM

KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 24 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY NON-MALAY POLITICIANS INCLUDING MPS ARE NOW MORE PROFICIENT IN BAHASA MALAYSIA THAN WHEN THE COUNTRY WAS IN THE INFANCY OF ITS INDEPENDENCE.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SOME HOWEVER WHO STILL LACKED FLUENCY, MASTERY OF THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE AMONG THIS GROUP INCLUDING THE CHINESE AND INDIANS HAD ON THE WHOLE IMPROVED.

THEY NEEDED TO HAVE GOOD BAHASA MALAYSIA OTHERWISE THEY WOULD NOT GET WIDE SUPPORT FROM THE PEOPLE, HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER LAUNCHING AN ANTHOLOGY OF SELECTED POEMS AND DRAMAS OF NATIONAL LITERARY FIGURE USMAN AWANG HERE.

HE SAID BAHASA MALAYSIA HAD ALSO UNDERGONE RAPID DEVELOPMENT AS COULD BE SEEN FROM THE CIRCULATION FIGURES FOR THE BAHASA MALAYSIA NEWSPAPERS WHICH WERE HIGHER THAN THOSE OF THE OTHER NEWSPAPERS. THIS WAS BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WERE READING MORE NEWSPAPERS IN THE LANGUAGE MEDIUM. -- MORE

1612MST 24 09 87

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U E320 AAE
MAHATHIR-LANGUAGE 2 KUALA LUMPUR

THE PEOPLE SHOULD UPGRADE THEIR COMMAND OF BAHASA MALAYSIA AS THIS HAD BECOME A NECESSITY, HE SAID, CITING THE CASE OF THE JAPANESE WHO WERE NOW LEARNING THE LANGUAGE BECAUSE IT HAD BECOME NECESSARY FOR THEIR BUSINESS OPERATIONS.

AT PRESENT, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID, ONLY OPPOSITION PARTY POLITICIANS (WHO SEEK CHEAP POPULARITY) WERE USING AND RAISING THE BAHASA MALAYSIA ISSUE TO SERVE THEIR OWN POLITICAL INTERESTS.

FOR MALAYSIANS AS A WHOLE, THE USE OF THE LANGUAGE WAS NO LONGER A PROBLEM BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT PREVENT ANY COMMUNITY FROM USING ITS OWN MOTHER TONGUE.

HE BELIEVED SOCIETY WOULD COME TO A GRADUAL REALISATION OF THIS TRUTH WITH TIME.

HE ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT IN FACT NEVER OBJECTED TO BIBLES BEING WRITTEN IN BAHASA MALAYSIA TO TEACH THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN SEMINARIES AS HAD HAPPENED IN SABAH, BUT IT OBJECTED TO THE USE OF SEVERAL TERMS THAT COULD CONFUSE THE PEOPLE. -- MORE

1639MST 24 09 87

D947

U E323 AAE
MAHATHIR-LANGUAGE 3 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID THERE WERE AT LEAST SIX WORDS THAT COULD CREATE CONFUSION, SUCH AS THE WORD +ALLAH+ FOR GOD (IN THE CHRISTIAN SENSE) AND +SOLAT+ (PRAYERS) WHICH ESSENTIALLY WAS USED ONLY IN THE TEACHING OF ISLAM.

THIS HAD LED TO THE PEOPLE ASKING THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTION ON THE MATTER, HE ADDED.

ON THE REACTION TO HIS STATEMENT MADE IN THE FEDERAL TERRITORY OF LABUAN RECENTLY THAT THERE WAS NO LONGER ANY TEAM A AND TEAM B IN UMNO, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS UMNO PRESIDENT, SAID HE HAD MET FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK MUSA HITAM.

HE HAD ALSO MET FORMER TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER TENGGU RAZALEIGH HAMZAH ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS BUT TENGGU RAZALEIGH SO FAR HAD NOT RESPONDED TO HIS STATEMENT.

ASKED WHETHER THE MATTER WOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH KELANTAN UMNO LEADERS DURING HIS TWO-DAY VISIT TO THE STATE FROM OCT 2, HIS BRIEF ANSWER WAS THAT IT MIGHT. -- MORE

1655MST 24 09 87

D960

U E330 AAE
MAHATHIR-LANGUAGE 4 KUALA LUMPUR

ON WHETHER THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL MEETING THIS SATURDAY WILL TOUCH ON THIS SUBJECT, HE SAID IT NEED NOT BE DISCUSSED THERE AS A MEETING BETWEEN HIM AND TENGKU RAZALEIGH WAS WHAT ALL QUARTERS WANTED AND HOPED FOR.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR DECLINED TO ELABORATE, STRESSING THAT SUCH A MATTER SHOULD NOT BE MADE A PUBLIC DISCUSSION.

TENGKU RAZALEIGH HAD CHALLENGED AND FAILED TO UNSEAT DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AS THE UMNO PRESIDENT IN THE APRIL 24 UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. DATUK MUSA HITAM, WHO WAS ALIGNED TO TENGKU RAZALEIGH IN THE ELECTIONS, LOST HIS DEPUTY PRESIDENT POST TO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER GHAFAR BABA.

THE TWO OPPOSING CAMPS IN THE CONTEST FOR POSTS WERE DUBBED TEAM A AND TEAM B AND THERE HAD BEEN CALLS LATELY FOR THEIR RECONCILIATION IN THE INTERESTS OF PARTY UNITY. -- BERNAMA
1718MST 24 09 87