

D718

B E082 AAE
MAHATHIR-COMMITTEE (CORRECTED REPETITION)

KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 29 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THE UMNO SPECIAL COMMITTEE ENTRUSTED WITH RESOLVING THE MATTER OF THE SUIT CHALLENGING THE VALIDITY OF THE RECENT PARTY ELECTIONS HAS BEEN GIVEN A +FREE HAND+ TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVE.

+I AM NOT GOING TO SAY ANYTHING THAT MIGHT INFLUENCE THE COMMITTEE OR ANYBODY,+ THE UMNO PRESIDENT TOLD REPORTERS WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE COMMITTEE HAD MADE ANY OFFER TOWARDS AN OUT-OF-COURT SETTLEMENT TO THE 12 PARTY MEMBERS WHO TOOK OUT THE SUIT.

THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE HEADED BY UMNO SECRETARY-GENERAL DATUK SANUSI JUNID WAS SET UP BY THE PARTY'S SUPREME COUNCIL TO SETTLE THE MATTER OF THE COURT SUIT FILED BY THE 12 TO HAVE THE APRIL 24 PARTY ELECTIONS DECLARED NULL AND VOID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE DID NOT KNOW HOW MANY IN THE GROUP WERE WILLING TO SETTLE THE MATTER OUT OF COURT BUT ADDED: +I KNOW OF ONLY ONE WHO HAS WITHDRAWN (FROM THE GROUP).+

ON COMMENTS BY CERTAIN QUARTERS THAT A NEUTRAL PERSON AND NOT DATUK SERI SANUSI SHOULD BE HEADING THE COMMITTEE BECAUSE HE IS AN +INTERESTED PARTY+ IN THE CASE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: +WE ARE ALL INTERESTED; THERE IS NOBODY THAT IS NOT INTERESTED.+ -- MORE
(ENDS CORRECTED REPETITION)

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ON SUGGESTIONS THAT UMNO VICE-PRESIDENT DATUK ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI BE THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN INSTEAD, HE SAID, +HE IS ALSO INTERESTED.+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER OPENING THE ORANG ASLI AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT MUSEUM KM 19 JALAN GOMBAK NEAR HERE.

+THE MATTER HAS BEEN LEFT ENTIRELY TO THE COMMITTEE AND IT HAS BEEN GIVEN A FREE HAND,+ HE SAID, ADDING: +I HOPE THE PROBLEM WILL BE SETTLED.+

ACCORDING TO A NEWSPAPER REPORT TODAY, 10 OF THE 12 PARTY MEMBERS HAD EXPRESSED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO MEET THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WHO IS ALSO HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER SAID INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE BURNING OF FIVE MOSQUES IN PAHANG RECENTLY HAD NOT COME UP WITH SUFFICIENT +MATERIAL+ TO WORK ON.

HE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG THE INVESTIGATIONS WOULD TAKE OR WHEN THE CULPRITS WOULD BE CAUGHT.

FIVE MOSQUES WERE SET ON FIRE BY ARSONISTS ON AUG 30 AND 31 -- TWO IN THE STATE CONSTITUENCY OF CHINI, TWO IN BERA AND ONE IN CHEMOR. DURING THE SAME PERIOD TWO COMMUNITY HALLS, A MULTIPURPOSE COMPLEX AND A PENGHULU'S OFFICE IN PEKAN AND TEMERLOH WERE ALSO BURNED. -- MORE

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DEPUTY HOME MINISTER DATUK MEGAT JUNID MEGAT AYUB HAD SAID THE INCIDENTS WERE THE WORK OF ARSONISTS WHO HAD NO POLITICAL, RACIAL OR RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS.

POLICE HAVE OFFERED A \$50,000 REWARD FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE ARREST OF THE CULPRITS. -- BERNAMA

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