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KUALA LUMPUR, OCT 26⁸⁷ (BERNAMA) -- EFFORTS TO ERADICATE POVERTY AND RESTRUCTURE SOCIETY AS PART OF MOVES TO ATTAIN NATIONAL UNITY WILL BE CONTINUED EVEN AFTER 1990, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD THE DEWAN RAKYAT THAT THE OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY NEED NOT NECESSARILY END IN 1990.

THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FROM THEN ON, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED IN DETAIL TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE PREVAILING SITUATION, HE SAID WHEN REPLYING TO ENCIK LEE LAM THYE (DAP-BUKIT BINTANG) WHO WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (NEP) WILL BE EXTENDED BEYOND 1990.

THE VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE WOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN DRAWING UP THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY FROM THEN ON, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.

HE ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT PROPOSE TO SET UP A PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE TO STUDY WEAKNESSES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEP. -- MORE

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PARLIAMENT-NEP 2 KUALA LUMPUR

THOUGH ALLEGATIONS HAD BEEN MADE ABOUT WEAKNESSES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEP, NO PROOF HAD BEEN PROVIDED TO SUBSTANTIATE THEM, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT, NEVERTHELESS, WELCOMED CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM AND VIEWS FROM THE PUBLIC ABOUT WEAKNESSES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEP AND WOULD STRIVE TO OVERCOME THEM, HE ADDED.

ON THE NEP'S SUCCESSES, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE OVERALL POVERTY RATE WAS REDUCED FROM 49.3 PERCENT IN 1970 TO 18.4 PERCENT IN 1984.

THE POVERTY RATE IN THE RURAL AREAS DROPPED FROM 58.7 PERCENT IN 1970 TO 24.7 PERCENT IN 1984, HE SAID.

THE NUMBER OF BUMIPUTERA ENTREPRENEURS/PROFESSIONALS/WORKERS IN VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY ALSO INCREASED WHEN COMPARED WITH THE SITUATION IN 1970, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID. -- MORE

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PARLIAMENT-NEP 3 KUALA LUMPUR

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE OBJECTIVES OF THE NEP HAD TO BE ATTAINED IN THE CONTEXT OF AN EXPANDED ECONOMY BUT THE ECONOMIC RECESSION HAD STIFLED GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TOWARDS REALISING ITS OBJECTIVES BY 1990.

REPLYING TO HAJI BUJANG ULIS (INDEPENDENT-SIMUNJAN), DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT MAKE DETAILED STUDIES ON NEP ACHIEVEMENTS IN EACH STATE AS THIS WOULD BE TIME CONSUMING AND MOREOVER VARIOUS OTHER PROGRAMMES HAD TO BE IMPLEMENTED.

REPLYING TO DR V.DAVID (DAP-PUCHONG) WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ACCORD THE SAME CITIZENSHIP STATUS TO ALL COMMUNITIES AFTER 1990 IN THE INTEREST OF NATIONAL UNITY, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID WHAT WAS IMPORTANT WAS NOT MERE PRONOUNCEMENTS BUT ACTUAL EFFORTS TOWARDS ENSURING NATIONAL UNITY. -- BERNAMA

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