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MAHATHIR - MIM

KUALA LUMPUR, NOV 16<sup>7</sup> (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THAT IN THE QUEST FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAS TO ACCEPT THE SINCERITY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO WORK FOR THE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF THE COUNTRY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE RIGHT AND COULD CERTAINLY BE WRONG BUT IT +CANNOT BE ACCUSED OF DELIBERATELY DOING HARM TO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY+.

WITH THAT ACCEPTANCE, THE GOVERNMENT-PRIVATE SECTOR COOPERATION WOULD BECOME A REALITY, HE SAID IN HIS KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE +MINISTERIAL BRIEFING: TOWARDS NATIONAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY+ ORGANISED BY THE MALAYSIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT (MIM) AT THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE (PWTC) HERE.

HE SAID: +EVEN THE CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED BY THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (NEP) ARE MEANT FOR THE GENERAL ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE PEOPLE. WILL THE COUNTRY BE STABLE POLITICALLY IF THE GOVERNMENT MAKES NO EFFORT TO BALANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIFFERENT RACES?+

+OF WHAT USE IS A LIBERAL POLICY ON COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IF THE COUNTRY IS PLAGUED BY ENVY AND JEALOUSY BETWEEN RACES WHICH CAN CONSTANTLY DESTABILISE THE NATION,+ -- MORE.

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ASKED: +WHAT CAN THE GOVERNMENT DO TO HELP THE RECOVERY, IF THE PEOPLE ARE READY TO POINT AT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES AS THE CAUSE OF THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DECLINE?+

HE SAID THE PEOPLE SHOULD TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT EXISTING POLICIES TO SEE WHETHER THE POLICIES HAD BEEN GIVEN A CHANCE TO BE PROPERLY IMPLEMENTED OR WHETHER THEY WERE SO BAD THEY HAD CAUSED THE PRESENT POOR PERFORMANCE OF THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY.

HE ALSO SAID IF THE MALAYSIAN ECONOMY WERE TO RECOVER, THE PEOPLE MUST BE POSITIVE AND READY TO TRY OUT NEW IDEAS AND IMPROVISE ALONG THE WAY AS THERE WERE NO PERFECT IDEAS.

+WE HAVE TO CONSTANTLY WORK AT IT IF WE WANT TO REMAIN STABLE AND THE NEP IS A MAJOR INSTRUMENT FOR ACHIEVING ALL-ROUND STABILITY. MALAYSIA HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO CHOOSE THE NEP AND TRY TO MANAGE THE CONSTRAINTS,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR REITERATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS STILL COMMITTED TO PROMOTING THE WORK ETHICS OF THE EAST AMONG THE MALAYSIAN WORKFORCE THROUGH THE LOOK EAST POLICY. -- MORE

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MALAYSIANS HAD TO CORRECT THEIR WORK ETHICS WHICH, ACCORDING TO HIM, WERE +DRAGGING+ THEM DOWN, AND ADOPT THE WORK ETHICS OF THE SUCCESSFUL.

ON PRIVATISATION, HE SAID THAT SINCE INDEPENDENCE, THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALLOWED ITSELF TO BE DRAGGED INTO ACTIVITIES THAT WERE NOT OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE CHARACTER, AND MOST OF THESE HAD LED TO INEFFICIENCY IN THE SERVICES PROVIDED AND MASSIVE LOSSES.

WHEN AN AGENCY WAS PRIVATISED, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT NEED NOT LOSE EVERYTHING. IT COULD STILL GAIN THROUGH INCOME TAX AND OTHER MEANS SHOULD THE COMPANY MAKE A PROFIT, AND, AT THE VERY LEAST, IT WOULD NO LONGER BEAR THE BURDEN OF PAYING SALARIES, PROVIDING MAINTENANCE AND IN MANY CASES, INJECTING MORE CAPITAL.

HE SAID COMPANIES AND FACILITIES WHICH HAD BEEN PRIVATISED HAD ATTAINED BETTER RETURNS BESIDES GIVING BETTER SERVICES.

HOWEVER, THE PRIVATE SECTOR MUST PLAY A MORE DYNAMIC ROLE TO HELP THE RECOVERY OF THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY. -- MORE --  
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HE ALSO SAID WHILE THE GOVERNMENT WELCOMED ADVICE FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY ON WHAT IT SHOULD DO, IT WAS WORTHWHILE FOR THE BUSINESS PEOPLE TO DO SOME RETHINKING ABOUT THEIR APPROACHES TO BUSINESS.

HE URGED BUSINESSMEN NOT TO BE NEGATIVE BY TEARING INTO GOVERNMENT POLICIES THE MOMENT THEY WERE ANNOUNCED, BUT TO LOOK AT THE POSITIVE ASPECTS AND TRY TO SEE WHAT GOOD COULD BE DERIVED FROM THESE POLICIES. -- BERNAMA  
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