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MAHATHIR
BM

KUALA LUMPUR, DEC 11 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY CALLED ON MALAYSIANS TO ACCEPT BAHASA MALAYSIA AS THE SYMBOL OF NATIONAL PRESTIGE AND MAKE IT AN EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION AMONG THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE COUNTRY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE PEOPLE SHOULD ALTER THEIR ATTITUDE OF REGARDING AND USING BAHASA MALAYSIA FOR ONLY SIMPLE DEALINGS OR WHEN THEY HAD TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

LOVE FOR THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE SHOULD BE NURTURED AND ENRICHED BY PRACTISING IT BECAUSE CONSTANT PRACTICE WOULD INSTIL CONFIDENCE TO MAINTAIN THE LOVE FOR THE LANGUAGE, HE SAID WHEN LAUNCHING THE +LOVE BAHASA MALAYSIA MOVEMENT+ HERE.

+WITHOUT PRACTISING IT, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR US TO CONVINCE OURSELVES AND OTHERS THAT WE LOVE THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE,+ HE SAID.

IN LINE WITH THIS, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR URGED EVERYONE, PARTICULARLY THE PRIVATE SECTOR, TO MAKE GREATER USE OF BAHASA MALAYSIA BOTH IN SPEECH AND WRITING IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH THE REST OF MALAYSIAN SOCIETY AND NOT JUST IN OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT. -- MORE

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HE SAID IN REBUILDING OR NURTURING THE PEOPLE'S LOVE FOR THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE, OUTSIDE FACTORS -- OPPORTUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT -- SHOULD ALSO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

LANGUAGE PLANNING BODIES SUCH AS THE DEWAN BAHASA DAN PUSTAKA SHOULD PLAY A BIGGER AND MORE EFFECTIVE ROLE AND STEP UP THEIR EFFORTS TO WIDEN AND MONITOR THE USE OF THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE, APART FROM THE EFFORTS OF VOLUNTARY AND LANGUAGE AND LITERARY ORGANISATIONS.

TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE USE OF BAHASA MALAYSIA IN OFFICIAL DEALINGS AND TO FULLY IMPLEMENT THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY, HE STRESSED THAT A REVIEW MUST BE CONDUCTED OF THE LEGAL PROVISIONS AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO THE USE OF LANGUAGE WITHOUT IMPINGING ON THE UNDERSTANDING ACHIEVED AMONG THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES WHEN INDEPENDENCE WAS ATTAINED.

HE SAID A STUDY WAS ALSO NECESSARY TO FURTHER EXTEND THE USE OF BAHASA MALAYSIA AND NOTE ITS ACHIEVEMENTS AND TO IDENTIFY THE MAIN PROBLEMS IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, INCLUDING THE PROFESSIONS SUCH AS LAW AND MEDICINE.

EVEN THOUGH THE LEVEL OF USE OF BAHASA MALAYSIA AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR WAS ALMOST COMPREHENSIVE, BUT THE QUALITY HAD YET TO REACH AN EXEMPLARY LEVEL WORTHY OF EMULATION BY OTHER USER SECTORS, HE SAID. -- MORE

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MAHATHIR 3 KUALA LUMPUR

+THIS MATTER SHOULD RECEIVE URGENT ATTENTION BECAUSE SPELLING GUIDANCE, TERMINOLOGY AND GRAMMAR HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED AND NO LONGER POSE A BIG PROBLEM FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS TO HANDLE.+ DATUK SERI OR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THE NEED TO LEARN AND USE VARIOUS LANGUAGES TO ENABLE MALAYSIANS COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER WOULD LESSEN IN TIME BECAUSE THE PRESENT YOUNGER GENERATION WAS ALREADY FLUENT IN BAHASA MALAYSIA.

AS SUCH, HE SAID, THIS WOULD NOT JEOPARDISE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ONE GROUP AND ANOTHER BECAUSE ALL GROUPS ALREADY HAD MASTERED THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE, MEANING THAT WITH ONE LANGUAGE THE PEOPLE WERE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH EVERYONE ELSE IN THE COUNTRY.

HE DID NOT DENY THE IMPORTANCE OF AND NEED FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN MANY ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS AND PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS, PARTICULARLY WITH INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES, BUT HE QUESTIONED THE TENDENCY TO USE THE LANGUAGE WIDELY TO THE NEGLECT OF THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE.

THIS MIGHT BE DUE TO LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE CAPACITY OF THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE, HE SAID AND ADDED THAT THIS ATTITUDE SHOULD BE DISCARDED BECAUSE BAHASA MALAYSIA WAS NOT LACKING IN ANY WAY TO BE APPLIED IN COMMUNICATION MATTERS. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR 4 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD UNDERTAKEN VARIOUS EFFORTS TO FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS AND THE SPIRIT OF THE CONSTITUTION AND THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE ACT TO BUILD, EXPAND AND UPHOLD BAHASA MALAYSIA IN KEEPING WITH ITS STATUS AND ROLE.

+NOW AFTER 30 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE, WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE QUESTIONING THE POSITION AND STATUS OF BAHASA MALAYSIA, FROM THE LEGAL ASPECT OR THE POSITION OF THE LANGUAGES OF OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THIS COUNTRY BECAUSE EVERYTHING IS SO CLEAR AND SHOULD NOT BE MADE AN ISSUE.

+IN THIS CONTEXT, LANGUAGE WILL NO LONGER BE ALLOWED TO BE TURNED INTO A POLITICAL ISSUE, MORE SO A RACIAL ISSUE WHICH CAN UNDERMINE NATIONAL STABILITY AND UNITY BECAUSE THE POSITION AND STATUS OF EVERY LANGUAGE IN THIS COUNTRY HAD BEEN CONSENTED TO JOINTLY .+

HE SAID PEOPLE WHOSE MOTHER TONGUE IS BAHASA MELAYU ALSO HAD A SPECIAL ROLE IN EFFORTS TO EXPAND THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE -- BY USING THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE WELL AND AVOIDING DIALECTS WHEN SPEAKING, INCLUDING WITH NON-MALAYS.

HE BELIEVED THAT THROUGH THIS, THE NON-MALAYS' COMMAND OF THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE WOULD REACH THE OPTIMUM LEVEL IN ONE MORE GENERATION. -- BERNAMA
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