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U E081 AAE
MAHATHIR-AMEND

BM

88
KUALA LUMPUR, OCT 28 (BERNAMA) -- UMNO PRESIDENT DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMED SAID THE AMENDMENTS TO THE PARTY'S CONSTITUTION APPROVED AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TODAY DO NOT MEAN +UMNO IS NO LONGER UMNO.+

+EVEN BEFORE THIS WE HAD BEEN MAKING AMENDMENTS (TO THE PARTY CONSTITUTION) ALMOST NON-STOP ... WE HAVE EVEN AMENDED THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER THE ASSEMBLY HELD A SPECIAL SESSION TO DISCUSS AND ADOPT THE AMENDMENTS AND THE CONSTITUTION.

THE SESSION STARTED AT 2.43PM AND ENDED 75 MINUTES LATER.

ON THE SPEED AT WHICH THE AMENDMENTS WERE APPROVED, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID A CLARIFICATION ON THEM WAS GIVEN YESTERDAY IN A CLOSED-DOOR MEETING WITH DIVISIONAL HEADS AND OTHER OFFICIALS.

THE MAJORITY OF THOSE PRESENT UNDERSTOOD THE ISSUES INVOLVED. HOWEVER, THERE WERE SOME WHO RAISED FEARS THE AMENDMENTS WOULD RENDER THE PARTY LESS DEMOCRATIC, ESPECIALLY THE PROVISION OF 10 ADDITIONAL VOTES FOR EACH DIVISIONAL NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE PRESIDENT AND DEPUTY PRESIDENT POSTS. -- MORE

1843MST 28 10 88

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B E101 AAE
MAHATHIR-AMEND 2 KUALA LUMPUR

+WE EXPLAINED THIS WILL MAKE US MORE DEMOCRATIC ... FROM ONLY 1,500 (DELEGATES) WHO MAKE THE DECISION, WE EXPAND IT TO 65,000. THUS, MORE VOICE IN THE DECISION-MAKING,+ HE SAID.

THE BRIEFING RESULTED IN SMOOTH PASSAGE OF TODAY'S SPECIAL SESSION, HE ADDED.

REPLYING TO REPORTERS' QUESTIONS ON WHETHER THERE IS ANY TRUTH TO THE ALLEGATIONS THAT THE ATMOSPHERE AT YESTERDAY'S MEETING WAS TENSE, PARTICULARLY OVER THE PROVISION FOR THE 10 BONUS VOTES, THE UMNO PRESIDENT SAID THE MEETING WAS NOT TENSE, ONLY THAT THOSE PRESENT EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN OVER THE MATTER.

HE ALSO GAVE THE REASONS FOR HOLDING THE CLOSED-DOOR MEETING.

HE SAID IT WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE +AT TIMES IN UMNO, WE CANNOT MAKE CLARIFICATIONS OPENLY BECAUSE THERE ARE SENSITIVE MATTERS THAT NEED TO BE CLARIFIED BEHIND CLOSED DOORS.+ -- MORE

1936MST 28 10 88

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B E103 AAE
MAHATHIR-AMEND 3 KUALA LUMPUR

UMNO DEPUTY PRESIDENT GHAFAR BABA SAID THE SPECIAL SESSION ENDED EARLY BECAUSE THE AIM BEHIND THE CONSTITUTION WAS GOOD AND IT WAS THOROUGHLY EXAMINED BEFORE BEING DRAFTED.

HE WAS HAPPY TO NOTE THE DELEGATES WERE +NOT FUSSY+, SAYING THEY WERE AWARE OF THE +MALADIES IN THE PARTY.+

THEY WERE SATISFIED WITH THE DEMOCRATIC FEATURES OF THE CONSTITUTION.

ENCIK GHAFAR SAID DELEGATES NOW WANTED TO CONCENTRATE ON DEVELOPMENT AND REDUCE POLITICKING.

UMNO INFORMATION CHIEF SENATOR DATUK HUSSEIN AHMAD SAID THE DISCUSSIONS ENDING EARLIER THAN EXPECTED SHOWED THE CONSTITUTION HAD SATISFIED THE WISHES OF THE DELEGATES.

IT ALSO DISPROVED SPECULATIONS THAT THE UMNO CONSTITUTION WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED BY THE DELEGATES. -- MORE

1948MST 28 10 88

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U E104 AAE
MAHATHIR-AMEND 4 KUALA LUMPUR

UMNO YOUTH CHIEF DATUK SERI MAJIB TUN RAZAK SAID HE HAD NOT EXPECTED THE SPECIAL SESSION TO END EARLY ALTHOUGH HE WAS CONFIDENT APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WOULD NOT ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTY.

ASKED WHETHER THE ANTI-UMNO GROUP WOULD MAKE POLITICAL CAPITAL OUT OF THE AMENDMENTS TO CLAIM THE CONSTITUTION HAD DEVIATED FROM THE ORIGINAL, HE SAID THIS SHOULD NOT ARISE.

THE AMENDMENTS WERE ONLY TECHNICAL ADJUSTMENTS BUT THE POLICY, PHILOSOPHY AND AIMS OF THE PARTY REMAINED THE SAME.

+IF THE NATURE OF OUR STRUGGLE DOES NOT CHANGE AND IS CONSISTENT WITH THE ORIGINAL, THEN THE OLD AND THE NEW UMNO ARE THE SAME,+ HE SAID.

WANITA UMNO CHIEF DATIN PADUKA RAFIDAH AZIZ SAID THE SHORT TIME TAKEN TO DEBATE AND APPROVE THE CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS REFLECTED THE SPIRIT OF CLOSE COOPERATION AMONG PARTY MEMBERS. -- BERNAMA
1952MST 28 10 88