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MAHATHIR-GOVERNMENT

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KUALA LUMPUR, FEB 5 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY REITERATED HIS ASSURANCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IS NOT AFFECTED FOLLOWING YESTERDAY'S HIGH COURT RULING THAT UMNO IS AN UNLAWFUL SOCIETY.

HE SAID THIS WAS BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT WAS ELECTED INTO POWER BY THE PEOPLE AND THE CANDIDATES STANDING FOR ELECTION WERE CONTESTING AS INDIVIDUALS DESPITE USING A PARTY SYMBOL.

HE TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT HIS OFFICE HERE THAT UNDER THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION, ANYONE COMMANDING THE SUPPORT OF THE MAJORITY OF THE DEWAN RAKYAT MEMBERS COULD BE MADE PRIME MINISTER.

+THE PRIME MINISTER CAN ONLY BE TOPPLED THROUGH A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE MOVED AGAINST HIM BY THE DEWAN RAKYAT MEMBERS OR WHEN HE LOSES THEIR SUPPORT,+ HE SAID.

+AS WE ALL KNOW, THERE IS NOTHING TO SHOW THE PRESENT PRIME MINISTER HAS LOST THE CONFIDENCE OF THE MAJORITY OF THE DEWAN RAKYAT MEMBERS.

+IN VIEW OF THIS, THE PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION IS NOT AFFECTED. THE SAME GOES FOR MINISTERS APPOINTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THEIR POSITION IS AS USUAL. THIS MEANS THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WILL FUNCTION AS USUAL. THERE IS NO EFFECT FROM THE DECISION MADE BY THE COURT,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS BARISAN NASIONAL CHAIRMAN AND UMNO PRESIDENT, SAID. UMNO IS THE LEADING PARTNER IN THE BN GOVERNMENT. -- MORE

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ASKED WHETHER THE COURT RULING WILL AFFECT POLITICAL STABILITY IN THE COUNTRY, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE DID NOT SEE THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL TENSION ARISING (FROM THE COURT DECISION) BECAUSE THE POLITICAL SITUATION DEPENDED MUCH MORE ON WHETHER OR NOT A GOVERNMENT EXISTED.

+THE GOVERNMENT STILL EXISTS. A GOVERNMENT HAVING THE SUPPORT OF THE MAJORITY OF MEMBERS OF THE DEWAN RAKYAT. THE SAME APPLIES FOR THE STATES, WHERE THE STATE GOVERNMENTS STILL EXIST,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER INDICATED HE MIGHT EMBARK ON A NATIONWIDE TOUR TO CLARIFY THE SITUATION TO THE PEOPLE.

+HOWEVER, I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MEET WITH UMNO MEMBERS. PERHAPS I SHALL ONLY MEET MY FRIENDS,+ HE SAID.

HE ADVISED THE PEOPLE TO REMAIN CALM AND AWAIT THE STEPS TO BE TAKEN.

YESTERDAY JUSTICE DATUK HARUN HASHIM, IN DISMISSING A SUIT AGAINST UMNO BROUGHT BY 11 MEMBERS, HELD UMNO TO BE AN UNLAWFUL SOCIETY WHEN IT HAD ITS 38TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ELECTIONS ON APRIL 24 LAST YEAR.

HE SAID HE BASED HIS DECISION ON THE SOCIETIES ACT WHICH DEEMS A SOCIETY TO BE UNLAWFUL IF IT HAS UNREGISTERED BRANCHES. HE ALSO FOUND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ELECTIONS TO BE A NULLITY. -- BERNAMA
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