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PULAU PINANG, SEPT 2 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID PEOPLE OF ALL RACES IN THE COUNTRY SHOULD MAINTAIN THE PRESENT HARMONY TO STRENGTHEN THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC GROWTH.

HE SAID THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY FOLLOWING THE WORST RECESSION IN 1985 AND 1986 WAS NOT BECAUSE OF THE INCREASE IN THE PRICES OF COMMODITIES BUT DUE TO THE PATIENCE SHOWN BY THE PEOPLE AND THEIR EFFORTS IN PRODUCING REASONABLE-PRICED GOODS WHICH COULD COMPETE IN THE WORLD MARKET.

+THE RESULT IS THAT WE COULD NOW EXPORT MORE PRODUCTS AND THIS DIRECTLY INCREASED THE COUNTRY'S INCOME,+ HE SAID AT THE PULAU PINANG RAKYAT DINNER AT PADANG KOTA LAMA HERE TONIGHT.

HE SAID FIGURES FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTH OF THE YEAR SHOWED THAT THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC GROWTH HAD INCREASED TO 7.5 PERCENT, WHICH WAS BETTER THAN MOST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

HE HOPED THE PEOPLE WOULD MAINTAIN HARMONY AND UNITY AMONGST THE RACES TO ACHIEVE CONTINUED ECONOMIC GROWTH SO THAT ECONOMIC RECOVERY COULD BE ACHIEVED IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE PERIOD. -- MORE  
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+WE ARE CAPABLE OF DEVELOPING THE COUNTRY, WHAT WE NEED IS HARMONY, WITHOUT CHAOS AND PEOPLE OF ALL RACES CONTINUING TO WORK HARD,+ HE STRESSED.

CITING THE RECENT FERRY TERMINAL TRAGEDY AS AN EXAMPLE, HE SAID HE WAS PROUD THAT PEOPLE OF ALL RACES CONTINUED TO SHOW THE SPIRIT OF UNITY AND COOPERATION REGARDLESS OF THEIR RACE AND RELIGION.

TAKING TONIGHT'S DINNER AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE LARGE GATHERING OF PEOPLE OF ALL RACES SHOWED THAT THEY WANTED TO LIVE PEACEFULLY AND DID NOT WANT TO LIVE IN TENSION OR FEAR.

HE SAID PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT RACES SHOULD NOT HARBOUR JEALOUSY AGAINST ONE ANOTHER AS THE NATION'S WEALTH WAS ENOUGH TO BE DIVIDED EQUALLY.

+WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT EVERY RAKYAT SHOULD WORK POSITIVELY AND DISCARD ANY ACTIVITY WHICH COULD DESTROY THE UNITY AND HARMONY THAT EXIST.

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+THIS IS ALSO THE REASON WHY THE GOVERNMENT ORGANISES LOYALTY WITH THE PEOPLE MOVEMENT (SEMARAK) TO PROVE THAT THE LEADERS AND PEOPLE OF ALL RACES ARE MALAYSIANS WHO ARE PROUD OF THEIR COUNTRY'S ACHIEVEMENT,+ HE STRESSED.

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ALSO HAPPY THAT SIMILARITIES IN THE CULTURES OF THE VARIOUS RACES WERE NOW SEEN AND HOPED THAT THE ASPIRATION TO DEVELOP THE NATIONAL CULTURE WOULD BE ACHIEVED ONE DAY.

IN PULAU PINANG ALONE, SIMILARITIES IN CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS COULD BE SEEN WITH THE MALAY CULTURE HAVING CHINESE CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND VICE-VERSA WHILE INDIAN CULTURAL INFLUENCE HAS LONG BEEN EMBEDDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HOPED THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT BE ASHAMED OF THESE SIMILARITIES BUT SHOULD PROMOTE THEM UNTIL THE PEOPLE WERE TRULY UNITED AND COULD LIVE PEACEFULLY TOGETHER.

THE PRIME MINISTER, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH ALI, WILL LAUNCH THE PULAU PINANG SEMARAK AT AMPANGAN MENGGUANG, BUKIT MERTAJAH TOMORROW MORNING. -- BERNAMA  
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