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MAHATHIR - GAMBLING

BM

JITRA, AUG 28 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY ADVISED MUSLIMS TO KEEP AWAY FROM GAMBLING IN LINE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO INCULCATE ISLAMIC VALUES.

HE SAID GAMBLING ACTIVITIES SHOULD NOT BE A MATTER OF CONTENTION BECAUSE OF THE MULTIRACIAL COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION AND THE RIGHT OF THE NON-MUSLIMS TO INDULGE IN GAMBLING.

WHAT WAS IMPORTANT WAS FOR MUSLIMS NOT TO INDULGE IN GAMES THAT ARE AGAINST THE RELIGION, HE ADDED IN HIS ADJOURNMENT SPEECH AT THE UMNO KUBANG PASU DIVISION DELEGATES MEETING HERE.

THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO WAS RETURNED UNOPPOSED AS THE DIVISION'S CHIEF, SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS GRADUALLY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF GAMBLING LICENCES BECAUSE TO COMPLETELY BAN GAMBLING ACTIVITIES WOULD ONLY ENCOURAGE ILLEGAL GAMBLING.

ACCORDING TO POLICE STATISTICS, ILLEGAL GAMBLING WAS ESTIMATED TO INVOLVE ABOUT \$5 BILLION A YEAR, IN ADDITION TO PROMOTING CORRUPTION AND GANGSTERISM, HE SAID. -- MORE

2021MST 28 08 89

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HE SAID THAT IF PEOPLE REALLY WANTED A HALT TO GAMBLING, NON-MUSLIMS WOULD RESPECT THEM FOR IT.

ON THE NEW RULES FOR TAXIS, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO UMNO PRESIDENT, EXPLAINED THAT THE HOPE TO ENSURE THAT TAXIS WERE OF A CERTAIN ENGINE CAPACITY WAS TO MAKE TAXI DRIVERS CHANGE VEHICLES WHICH WERE TOO OLD AND COULD NO LONGER BE PROPERLY MAINTAINED, IN THE INTERESTS OF PASSENGER SAFETY.

EARLIER, WHEN SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE SOLE RESOLUTION TABLED, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE PEOPLE NEED NOT NECESSARILY BLAME THE NATIONAL PADI AND RICE BOARD (LPN) OVER ITS PAYMENTS TO FARMERS.

THE RESOLUTION, WHICH, AMONG OTHERS, ASKED LPN TO REGULARISE ITS PAYMENTS RATES TO FARMERS AT ALL ITS COMPLEXES! WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

HE SAID FARMERS' DISSATISFACTION WITH LPN DID NOT INVOLVE POLICY BUT WAS DUE TO SHORTCOMINGS BY ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED INCLUDING THE FARMERS THEMSELVES.

HE, HOWEVER, PROMISED TO SEE HOW THE VARIOUS PROBLEMS OVER THE SALE OF PADI TO LPN COULD BE RESOLVED. -- BERNAMA

2023MST 28 08 89