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MAHATHIR-TAIB R R R R

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KUCHING, SEPT 21 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

TODAY DISPELLED SPECULATIONS ABOUT STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN HIM AND SARAWAK CHIEF MINISTER TAN SRI HAJI ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD.

OPENING THE SARAWAK PART1 PESAKA **BUMIPUTERA BERSATU (PBB)** GENERAL ASSEMBLY **HERE**, THE PRIME MINISTER EXPLAINED WHY HE RARELY VISITED THE STATE THIS YEAR.

**HE SAID** HIS LESS FREQUENT TRIPS TO SARAWAK HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT WAS INTERPRETED AS STRAINED RELATIONS WITH TAN SRI TAIB.

THE PRIME **MINISTER SAID DUE** TO UNAVOIDABLE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE **COULD NOT COME TO KUCHING.**

THE HONG KONG-BASED WEEKLY MAGAZINE FAR EASTERN **ECONOMIC** REVIEW RECENTLY REPORTED A RIFT BETWEEN DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AND TAN SRI TAIB WHICH SOURED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SARAWAK AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS.

SPEAKING BEFORE ABOUT **6,000 PEOPLE**, THE PRIME **MINISTER** SAID HE WAS INDISPOSED BECAUSE OF THE CORONARY BYPASS **OPERATION HE** UNDERWENT EARLY THIS YEAR AND WAS LATER ADVISED BY DOCTORS TO REST.

DATUK SERI **DR MAHATHIR SAID HE** ALSO HAD A BUSY SCHEDULE OF NATIONAL DUTIES INCLUDING THE NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS, INSTALLATION OF THE YANG DI-PERTUAN **AGONG** SULTAN AZLAN SHAH, THE XV SEA **GAMES** AND PREPARATIONS FOR NEXT MONTH'S **COMMONWEALTH** HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING (**CHOGM**). -- MORE

1417MST 21 09 89

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MAHATHIR-TAIB 2 KUCHING RRRR

HE SAID THESE COMMITMENTS NOT ONLY PREVENTED HIM FROM VISITING SARAWAK BUT EVEN KUBANG PASU (**HIS PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY**) AS WELL.

+I HOPE THE FOLKS IN KUBANG PASU WILL **REELECT ME**,+ HE **QUIPPED.**

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SPOKE ON THE GOVERNMENT IN SARAWAK **WHICH** HE SAID WAS RUNNING **SMOOTHLY** AND HAD BROUGHT ABOUT MUCH PROGRESS TO THE STATE.

**HOWEVER**, HE SAID, IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS UNHAPPY WITH THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WERE TRYING TO USURP POWER BY ILLEGAL MEANS.

HE WARNED THESE ELEMENTS THAT THE FEDERAL **GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT** HESITATE TO ACT AGAINST ANYONE TRYING TO GAIN POWER CLANDESTINELY.

+THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND ASSIST THE STATE GOVERNMENT ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE AGAINST ATTEMPTS TO UNDERMINE IT. **WE WANT TO BE FAIR BUT DON'T MISINTERPRET THIS AS OUR WEAKNESS**,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

1430MST 21 09 89

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HAHATHIR-TAIB 3 KUCHING RRRR

DATUK SERI DR HAHATHIR SAID IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITY TO CONSOLIDATE NATIONAL UNITY AND INTEGRATION BETWEEN THE PENINSULA, SARAWAK AND SABAH.

HOWEVER HE WARNED OF CERTAIN ELEMENTS BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT WHO WERE UNEASY WITH THE PRESENT STATE OF NATIONAL UNITY.

HE SAID THEY WOULD RATHER SEE THE PEOPLE DISUNITED AND THE COUNTRY UNPROGRESSIVE AND TO ACHIEVE THIS THEY CREATE ANXIETY AND SUSPICION AMONG THE PEOPLE:

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THESE ELEMENTS WOULD RESORT TO WHATEVER TACTICS TO UNDERMINE THE UNITY BY AROUSING THE PEOPLE'S SENTIMENTS TO FAN ILL-WILL AMONG MALAYSIANS.

THEY WOULD HARP ON THE PEOPLE'S DIVERGENT VIEWS, WHICH WERE NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A DEMOCRATIC NATION, AND SPARE NO EFFORTS IN CREATING ANIMOSITY AMONG THE PEOPLE SO AS TO GIVE A PICTURE OF A DIVIDED NATION, HE SAID.. -- MORE

1443MST 21 09 89

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U E383 AAE

MAHATHIR-TAIB 4 KUCHING RRRR

DATUK SERI DR HAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIANS MUST BE WARY OF AND AVOID BEING DUPED INTO JOINING THESE ELEMENTS WHO EITHER OPERATED ALONE OR IN GROUPS.

+THEY ARE BENT ON DESTROYING OUR SOLIDARITY ESPECIALLY THE UNITY BETWEEN THE PENINSULA AND SABAH AND SARAWAK,+ SAID THE PRIME MINISTER.

SINCE GAINING INDEPENDENCE IN 1957 AND SINCE SARAWAK AND SABAH JOINED THE PENINSULA TO FORM MALAYSIA IN 1963, THE COUNTRY EXPERIENCED TREMENDOUS PROGRESS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH COMPARED WITH COLONIAL DAYS.

HE SAID SABAH AND SARAWAK WHICH ARE RICH IN NATURAL RESOURCES HAVE UNDERGONE EXTRAORDINARY PROGRESS AND HAVE VARIOUS INFRASTRUCTURE ALTHOUGH NOT AT PAR WITH THE PENINSULA WHERE THE POPULATION WAS LARGER AND THE CONDITIONS WERE BETTER SINCE THE OLD DAYS.

THE PRIME MINISTER REMINDED THE PEOPLE NOT TO BE COMPLACENT WITH THE PROSPERITY THEY WERE ENJOYING AS PEACE AND DEMOCRACY COULD JUST PERISH IF THERE WERE NO EFFORTS TO SAFEGUARD THE SITUATION. -- MORE

1512MST 21 09 89

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U E389 AAE

MAHATHIR-TAIB5 KUCHING R R R R

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR CONGRATULATED TAN SRI TAIB FOR BEING RETURNED UNOPPOSED AS PBB PRESIDENT AND THE OTHER PARTY LEADERS AS WELL.

THIS SHOWED THAT PBB MEMBERS PLACED GREATER IMPORTANCE ON PARTY STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT THAN ON POWER STRUGGLE, HE SAID.

MEMBERS REALISED THAT CONTESTS COULD ONLY CAUSE SPLIT WITHIN THE PARTY WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO RECTIFY, HE SAID.

ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE COMMONWEALTH WOULD ALWAYS SEE TO IT THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CONTESTS FOR POSTS, HE SAID,

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID NO CONTEST DID NOT MEAN ABSENCE OF DEMOCRACY.

IN HIS SPEECH EARLIER TAN SRI TAIB SAID PBB MEMBERS MUST BE DISCERNING IN CHOOSING LEADERS TO AVOID THE PARTY BEING USED BY SELFISH POWER-GRABBERS.

HE SAID THEY MUST GIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO HONEST, INTELLIGENT CANDIDATES OF CALIBRE RATHER THAN +PROFESSIONAL POLITICIANS+ WHO USED THEIR EXPERTISE TO GRAB POWER. -- MORE

1558MST 21 09 89

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U E390 AAE

MAHATHIR-TAIB6 KUCHING R R R R

TAN SRI TAIB PRAISED THE PRIME MINISTER AS A MODEL LEADER TO BE EMULATED BY PBB MEMBERS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR IS A MAN OF VISION, STRONG-WILLED AND BOLD ESPECIALLY IN BRINGING THE NATION TO HIGHER LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT, HE SAID.

AT THE FUNCTION, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS SPRINKLED WITH +TEPUNG TAWAR+ BY TWO VETERAN PBB MEMBERS AS THANKSGIVING FOR HAVING SUCCESSFULLY UNDERGONE THE CORONARY BY-PASS OPERATION.

SO ALSO WERE HIS WIFE DATXN SERI DATUK PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH AND TAN SRI TAIB.

ALSO PRESENT WERE LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE VARIOUS BARISAN NASIONAL COMPONENT PARTIES.

THE TWO-DAY TRIENNIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY HERE IS BEING ATTENDED BY 1,300 PARTY DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS. -- BERNAMA

1559MST 21 09 89