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MAHATHIR-SEATS
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IPOH, AUG 6 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THAT UMNO HAS NO INTENTION OF TAKING AWAY THE SEATS ALLOCATED TO BARISAN NASIONAL (BN) COMPONENT PARTIES.

IN GIVING THIS ASSURANCE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE SEATS ALLOCATED TO COMPONENT PARTIES WOULD ONLY BE TAKEN AWAY IF THEY COULD BE REPLACED WITH OTHER SEATS.

IF THIS COULD NOT BE DONE, IT WOULD THEN BE DIFFICULT FOR UMNO TO MEET ITS MEMBERS' REQUEST FOR CERTAIN SEATS TO BE GIVEN TO UMNO, SAID DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WHO IS UMNO PRESIDENT.

OPENING THE GOPENG UMNO DIVISION DELEGATES CONFERENCE IN GOPENG NEAR HERE, HE SAID THAT UMNO NOT ONLY WISHED TO AVOID TUSSELS WITHIN THE PARTY, BUT ALSO TO AVOID SUCH A SITUATION OCCURRING AMONG THE BARISAN NASIONAL COMPONENT PARTIES.

THIS WAS IMPORTANT TO PRESERVE THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AMONG THE COMPONENT PARTIES OF THE BN TO MAINTAIN ITS STRENGTH? HE ADDED.

+THIS IS OUR PROBLEM. IT IS NOT BECAUSE WE DO NOT WANT TO ENTERTAIN SUCH REQUESTS BUT IT IS BECAUSE THE SITUATION (DOES NOT PERMIT IT),+ HE SAID. -- MORE

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MAHATHIR-SEATS 2 IPOH

IN HIS SPEECH, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO TOUCHED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE VARIOUS RACES, ALSO SAID THAT THE COOPERATION WHICH EXISTED AMONG THE BN COMPONENT PARTIES SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE PRESERVED.

AT THE SAME TIME, UMNO, WHICH IS THE DOMINANT PARTY OF THE BN GOVERNMENT, SHOULD REMAIN A STRONG PARTY TO ENSURE THAT THE COALITION DID NOT FACE ANY BREAKUPS, HE SAID.

UMNO'S STRUGGLES, HE SAID, NOT ONLY AFFECTED THE MALAYS BUT ALSO THE OTHER RACES AND THE NATION IN GENERAL.

+THE PREVAILING CONDUCIVE SITUATION, PEACE AND THE RAPID ECONOMIC GROWTH EXPERIENCED BY THE COUNTRY IS BECAUSE UMNO, AS A MAJOR PARTY, IS LEADING THE BN. THE MALAYS DO NOT FEEL THREATENED AND ACCEPT THE BN POLICIES.+

+IF THEY ARE SUSPICIOUS AND UNEASY WITH THE BN POLICIES, WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN TO THE COUNTRY,+ HE ADDED. -- MORE

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MAHATHIR-SEATS 3 IPOH

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: +I AM NOT MAKING A THREAT. IT'S BECAUSE IF THE MALAYS FEEL SAFE WITH BN POLICIES, THEY ARE READY TO COOPERATE WITH THE OTHER BN COMPONENT PARTIES.+

HE DEPLORED THE SEMANGAT 46 PARTY WHO CLAIMED THAT THE 40 PARLIAMENTARY SEATS HELD BY THE MALAYS WERE SUFFICIENT AND THEY COULD COOPERATE WITH NON-MALAY PARTIES.

HE SAID THAT A GOVERNMENT WITH A SMALL MALAY MAJORITY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO OPERATE BECAUSE THE MALAYS WOULD FOREVER BE IN FEAR THAT OTHER PARTIES MIGHT WITHDRAW THEIR SUPPORT RESULTING IN THE DOWNFALL OF THE GOVERNMENT.

IN THIS RESPECT, THE COUNTRY WOULD NOT ENJOY PEACE AND FOCUS WOULD ONLY BE ON POLITICS BECAUSE OF THE EVER-CHANGING GOVERNMENT WITH CROSS-OVERS FROM THE PARTY SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT TO THAT OF THE OPPOSITION TO GIVE THEM A MAJORITY HE SAID.

IN SUCH A SITUATION, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES TO DEVELOP THE ECONOMY FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL THE RACES, HE ADDED.

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MAHATHIR-SEATS 4 IPOH

HE ALSO CRITICISED LEADERS OF THE SEMANGAT 46 PARTY FOR CLAIMING THAT THE PARTY ADHERED TO THE TRUE CONSTITUTION OF UMNO SET UP IN 1946.

+I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION THEY HAVE BEEN LAUDING WERE NOT ACTUALLY DRAFTED IN 1946. THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION IN THAT YEAR HAD ACTUALLY BEEN AMENDED SEVERAL TIMES AND THE PARTY CONSTITUTION AT THE TIME IT WAS DECLARED UNLAWFUL WAS THE ONE WHICH WAS LAST AMENDED IN 1976,+ HE SAID.

ON THE CONTEST FOR POSTS AT DIVISIONAL LEVEL, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR REITERATED HIS CALL THAT PARTY MEMBERS SHOULD AVOID TUSSELES AT THAT LEVEL FOR THE SAKE OF THE PARTY'S STRENGTH.

+WHAT IS THE USE OF US CONTESTING AND BECOMING DIVISION HEADS AND MAYBE NOMINATED AS CANDIDATES IF THE CONTEST RESULTED IN DISUNITY AMONG PARTY MEMBERS AND CAUSED US TO LOSE THE ELECTION?+ HE SAID.

HE ADVISED UMNO MEMBERS TO BE PATIENT IN WAITING FOR THEIR TURN TO BECOME LEADERS AND TO PRESERVE PARTY UNITY BECAUSE WHAT WAS IMPORTANT WAS FOR UMNO TO REMAIN STRONG AND WIN ELECTIONS. -- MORE
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R E175 A A E
MAHATHIR-SEATS 5 IPOH

HE SAID THAT MANY JUNIOR UMNO LEADERS WERE STILL YOUNG AND HAD PLENTY OF TIME TO CONTEST FOR POSTS OR THEY NEED NOT CONTEST BECAUSE +THE VETERANS WILL RETIRE AND THEY CAN TAKE THEIR PLACES.+

+JUST LOOK, WHEN TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN RETIRED, TUN ABDUL RAZAK TOOK OVER WITHOUT -ANY CONTEST. THE SAME GOES WHEN TUN RAZAK DIED, TUN HUSSEIN TOOK HIS PLACE WITHOUT ANY CHALLENGES AND WHEN TUN HUSSEIN GAVE UP HIS POST, I TOOK OVER, ALSO WITHOUT CONTEST. +

+AS SUCH THERE WERE NO DISUNITY BECAUSE THERE WERE NO CHALLENGES AND CONTESTS IN THE PARTY. BUT WHEN THERE WAS A CONTEST (IN APRIL 1987), THE RESULT WAS DISUNITY,+ HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT HE WAS IN UMNO FOR 18 YEARS BEFORE HE BECAME A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND DID NOT EVEN HOLD THE POST OF DIVISION HEAD BUT MERELY BECAME AN ORDINARY MEMBER.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, +AFTER 28 YEARS IN UMNO WAS I MADE A MINISTER, 30 YEARS BEFORE I HAD THE CHANCE TO BECOME DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND 36 YEARS BEFORE BECOMING PRIME MINISTER.+

+HOW MANY UMNO LEADERS SEEKING POSTS ARE THERE WITH 18 YEARS' MEMBERSHIP?+ HE ADDED. -- BERNAMA
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