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MAHATHIR (WITH PIX)
BM

KUALA LUMPUR, AUG 17 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY DIRECTED LOCAL COUNCILS TO IMPROVE ON THEIR ADMINISTRATION.

THERE WAS NO POINT IN HAVING EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION AT FEDERAL OR STATE LEVELS WHEREAS IT WAS NOT SO AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT-LEVEL, HE SAID.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES MUST BE EFFICIENT TO FACE FUTURE CHALLENGES AND TO AVOID DISRUPTION OF THE NATION'S ECONOMY, HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LOCAL COUNCILLORS AT THE PUTRA, WORLD TRADE CENTRE HERE.

ADMINISTRATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS AT ALL LEVELS MUST BE UPGRADED AND STREAMLINED JUST AS THAT OF STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS, HE SAID.

+WE LIKE TO SEE GOOD ADMINISTRATION FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DOWN TO KAMPUNG LEVEL TO ENSURE IMPROVED ECONOMIC GROWTH+, HE SAID.

THIS WOULD REQUIRE LOCAL COUNCILLORS NOT ONLY TO LOOK AT ADMINISTRATIVE METHODS IN OTHER COUNCILS BUT AT STATE AND FEDERAL ADMINISTRATIONS AS WELL, HE SAID.-- MORE
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THE PRIME MINISTER SAID LOCAL COUNCILLORS WOULD FACE ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS FOLLOWING INCREASED RURAL TO URBAN MIGRATION OF THE NATION'S POPULATION.

IN 1970, ABOUT 27 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION WERE URBAN-BASED AND THIS INCREASED TO 46 PERCENT IN 1986. BY THE YEAR 2000 IT IS EXPECTED TO TOUCH 60 PERCENT, HE SAID.

NO NATION COULD STOP SUCH MIGRATION AS IT REFLECTED A COUNTRY'S LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MIGRATION BROUGHT ADDED PROBLEMS OF RESETTLEMENT AND SQUATTERS, SANITATION AND ROADS WHICH LOCAL COUNCILS MUST OVERCOME.

+WHETHER WE CAN OVERCOME THESE PROBLEMS DEPENDS ON WISDOM, EFFICIENCY, INTEREST AND DEDICATION OF LOCAL COUNCILLORS+, HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IF LOCAL COUNCILS COULD NOT MANAGE AND OVERCOME THESE PROBLEMS! THE MIGRANTS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BENEFIT FROM THEIR MIGRATION.

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AS SUCH, THE ROLE OF LOCAL COUNCILLORS WOULD BE MORE IMPORTANT AS THEY WOULD BE INVOLVED IN ADMINISTERING A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIANS MUST BE MORE CIVIC MINDED AND AWARE OF THE NEED TO MAINTAIN CLEANLINESS OF PUBLIC TOILETS AND OF PROPER USE RUBBISH DUMPS.

+IT IS MEANINGLESS FOR THE NATION TO BECOME RICHER AND MORE PROPEROUS BUT IN ACTUAL FACT WE LIVE IN GARBAGE HEAPS. THIS WILL HAPPEN WHEN WE CAN'T MANAGE,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IF THE PEOPLE COULD KEEP TOWNS NOT ONLY CLEAN BUT BEAUTIFUL AND COMFORTABLE; THEN THEY HAVE PROVEN TO THE WORLD THAT THEY HAVE BUILT A CIVILISATION THAT THE NATION COULD BE PROUD OF.

HE SAID IF MALAYSIANS WANTED TO LIVE HEALTHILY AND A COMPLETE LIFE, THEY MUST EMPHASISE ON CLEANLINESS AND SPREAD THE WORD TO OTHERS.

SUCH AN ATTITUDE WOULD MAKE THE WORLD HOLD LOOK HIGHLY OF MALAYSIANS AS A CLEANLINESS-CONCSIOUS NATION AND WHO TOOK GREAT PAINS TO PRESERVE THE BEAUTY OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

HE SAID CLEANLINESS IS ONE THE NATION'S PRIORITIES ADDING THAT ALL TOWNS MUST BE CLEAN.-- MORE

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THE PRIME MINISTER HOPED THAT PUBLIC TOILETS WERE ALWAYS KEPT CLEAN SO AS TO AVOID TOURISTS FROM HAVING BAD IMAGE OF THE COUNTRY.

HE ADDED THAT THE PUBLIC TOILETS AT THE KUALA LUMPUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN SUBANG WAS MUCH CLEANER NOW.

HE SAID IN THE MODERN AGE, THERE WAS NO EXCUSE FOR HAVING FOUL-SMELLING TOILETS AS MANY TYPES OF DEODORANT AND AIR FRESHNERS WERE AVAILABLE.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID LOCAL COUNCILLORS MUST DISCHARGE THEIR DUTIES RESPONSIBLY TO THE RESIDENTS UNDER THEIR CARE AND NOT ONLY TO THOSE WHO APPOINTED THEM.

HE SAID THERE WAS MUCH GOOD IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED LOCAL COUNCILLORS AS COMPARED TO THE PRE-INDEPENDENT SYSTEM OF ELECTING THEM THROUGH BALLOTING.

LOCAL COUNCILLORS ELECTED UNDER THE PREVIOUS SYSTEM WERE MORE INCLINED TO RAISE NATIONAL AND RACIAL ISSUES RATHER THAN LOCAL ONES, HE SAID.

THE PRESENT SYSTEM WAS MORE BENEFICIAL AS IT ENABLED LOCAL COUNCILLORS TO SERVE IN THEIR AREAS REGARDLESS OF RACE, HE SAID.-- MORE

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HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, THE PRESENT SYSTEM TOO HAS ITS WEAKNESS IF LOCAL COUNCILLORS WERE RESPONSIBLE ONLY TO THE GOVERNMENT WHICH APPOINTED THEM AND NOT TO THE RESIDENTS IN THEIR AREA.

IF THIS WAS THE CASE, THEN THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE GOOD SERVICE TO THE RESIDENTS AND NATURALLY TO THE PEOPLE, THEY WOULD APPEAR USELESS .

ABOUT 2,800 LOCAL COUNCILLORS FROM THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTER LEE KIM SAI AND HIS DEPUTIES SENATOR DATUK HAJI HUSSEIN AHMAD AND OSU HAJI SUKAM ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE OPENING CEREMONY.

THE CONFERENCE THE FIRST ORGANISED BY THE MINISTRY WAS, AT AMONG OTHER THINGS, AIMED AT FAMILIARISING LOCAL COUNCILLORS WITH THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO DEVELOP LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN FACING THE CHALLENGES OF THE 1990S.-- BERNAMA
1458MST 17 08 89
