

R E211 AAE
MAHATHIR-GOVERNMENT
BM

MUAR, AUG 18 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER **DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD** TODAY URGED **MALAYS** TO ENSURE THAT UMNO MAINTAIN ITS POSITION AS THE BACKBONE OF THE BARISAN NASJONAL GOVERNMENT.

THE ROLE AS THE BACKBONE OF THE BN WAS VERY VITAL FOR UMNO AS PART OF EFFORTS TO CONTINUE PROTECTING THE INTEREST OF THE **MALAYS** WITHIN AND OUTSIDE **UMNO**, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS UMNO **PRESIDENT**, SAID UMNO'S STRENGTH SHOULD BE MAINTAINED BECAUSE WITHOUT A BACKBONE? A COALITION GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT SUCCEED.

+THE COALITION WILL NOT SUCCEED IF THERE IS NO BACKBONE OR IF THERE IS NO PARTY WHICH IS STRONG ENOUGH TO LEND SUPPORT TO THE **OTHERS**,+ HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE PAGOH UMNO DIVISION DELEGATES MEETING HERE.

IN **MALAYSIA**, THE COALITION GOVERNMENT SINCE MERDEKA HAD BEEN STRONG BECAUSE UMNO WAS THE BACKBONE OF THE GOVERNMENT9 HE SAID. -- MORE

1038MST 18 08 89

R E214 AAE
MAHATHIR-GOVERNMENT 2 **MUAR**

AT THE SAME **TIME**, HE **SAID**, UMNO DID NOT NEGLECT THE INTEREST OF THE **MALAYS**.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT IN SOME **COUNTRIES**, **COALITION** GOVERNMENTS ENDED UP IN DISARRAY BECAUSE THERE WAS NO PARTY 'WITHIN IT WHICH COULD ACT AS THE BACKBONE.

CONSIDERING **THIS**, HE SAID THE **MALAYS** SHOULD ENHANCE UNITY AND NOT SUPPORT EFFORTS TO WEAKEN THEIR POWER IN UMNO.

IF MALAY POWER WAS WEAKENED3 THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO **BE WEAK** AND THIS WOULD CREATE PROBLEMS NOT ONLY TO THE **MALAYS** BUT ALSO TO THE NON **MALAYS**, HE SAID.

+MALAYS WHO DO NOT GIVE PRIORITY TO THE STRENGTH OF UMNO ARE THOSE WHO ARE ACTUALLY TRYING TO WEAKEN THE **RACE**,+ HE SAID. -- MORE
1842MST 18 08 89

R E215 A A E
MAHATHIR-GOVERNMENT 3 **MUAR**

BASED ON THIS **FACT**, **DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR** SAID UMNO WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT ALL **MALAYS** AS MEMBERS TO ENSURE THAT **MALAYS** SUPPORTED THE **PARTY**, WHICH WAS THE BIGGEST MALAY POLITICAL ORGANISATION AND THE CAPABILITY OF WHICH COULD NOT BE QUESTIONED ANYMORE.

HE SAID THAT IN SOME **AREAS**, THE **MALAYS** WERE DIVIDED INTO SUPPORTING UMNO AND PAS AND IF UMNO WAS FURTHER **DIVIDED**, THERE WOULD BE NO UMNO UNITY.

THIS WOULD WEAKEN THE **MALAYS THEMSELVES**, HE ADDED.

THE PRIME MINISTER QUESTIONED THE MOTIVE BEHIND THOSE WANTING TO SET UP A **COALITION** PARTY WITH OTHERS IN WHICH THE **MALAYS** PLAYED **ONLY** A SMALL ROLE.

WHAT WAS IMPORTANT NOW WAS NOT SETTING UP A GOVERNMENT BUT ENSURING THAT THE PRESENT **GOVERNMENT** WAS STRONG WITH UMNO BEING THE BACKBONE, HE SAID.

+WE ARE NOT DENYING THAT THE UMNO SPLINTER GROUP MAY GET SOME SEATS (**IN** THE GENERAL ELECTION) AND THEY CAN CO-OPERATE WITH DAP AND PAS TO HAVE MORE THAN HALF THE NUMBER OF SEATS AND FORM **THE** GOVERNMENT BUT THIS GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PROTECT THE **MALAYS**,+ HE SAID.

JOHOR MENTERI BESAR TAN SRI HAJI MUHYIDDIN **YASSIN**, WHO IS ALSO PAGOH UMNO DIVISION **HEAD**, SAID UMNO MEMBERS SHOULD ALWAYS ADHERE STRICTLY TO THE PARTY'S PRINCIPLES.

HE SAID UMNO MEMBERS SHOULD NOT CREATE FACTIONS WITHIN THE PARTY. -- EERNAMA
1846MST 18 08 89