

D604

R E778 AAE

MAHATHIR - CHARLES (REQUESTED RPTN FOR BORNEO POST)

BM

PETALING JAYA, FEB 22 (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA LODGED AN OFFICIAL PROTEST OVER PRINCE CHARLES' ALLEGATION OF GENOCIDE AGAINST THE PENANS IN SARAWAK BECAUSE IT IS CONCERNED THAT THE CHARGE MADE BY A PERSON OF HIS POSITION WOULD BE BELIEVED BY THE WORLD COMMUNITY.

PRIME MINISTER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE WORLD COMMUNITY MIGHT BELIEVE THE ALLEGATION IF THE STATEMENT WAS NOT CORRECTED.

+WE FEEL HURT NOT BECAUSE OF THE ACCUSATION THAT WE ARE ENGAGED IN EXCESSIVE FELLING OF TREES BUT BECAUSE (PRINCE CHARLES) ACCUSED US OF BEING INVOLVED IN GENOCIDE AGAINST THE PENANS,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER ATTENDING THE PRESENTATION OF THE MALAYSIAN JOURNALISM AWARDS HERE TODAY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE ALLEGATIONS WERE TOTALLY BASELESS.

A NEWSPAPER REPORT YESTERDAY SAID THE PROTEST WAS CONTAINED IN A +FULL BRIEF+ SENT TO THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AND FOREIGN OFFICE BY THE MALAYSIAN HIGH COMMISSION IN LONDON TO BE HANDED TO BUCKINGHAM PALACE. -- MORE

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MAHATHIR - CHARLES 2 PETALING JAYA

PRINCE CHARLES WAS REPORTED TO HAVE MADE THE STATEMENT WHEN DELIVERING A TALK ON TROPICAL FORESTS IN THE PRESENCE OF TIMBER MERCHANTS, SCIENTISTS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS AT THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS IN KEW, LONDON ON FEB 6.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO EXPRESSED REGRET OVER BRITAIN'S DECISION TO LIFT ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST THE SOUTH AFRICAN REGIME, ALTHOUGH HE ACCEPTED THAT IT WAS BRITAIN'S RIGHT TO DO SO AS A SOVEREIGN NATION.

HE SAID BRITAIN IS THE ONLY COUNTRY WHICH ADOPTED A NEUTRAL STAND ON ACTION TO BE TAKEN AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.

HE SAID HE EXPECTED TO MEET BLACK NATIONALIST LEADER, NELSON MANDELA, IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA, TO KNOW AT FIRST HAND CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AND WHAT ROLE MALAYSIA COULD PLAY TO CONTINUE HELPING THE STRUGGLE OF THE BLACK PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

HE RECEIVED ANOTHER CALL FROM ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT, KENNETH KAUNDA, ASKING HIM TO BE PRESENT AT THE MEETING OF FRONTLINE STATES AND TO ATTEND A RECEPTION FOR MANDELA IN THE ZAMBIAN CAPITAL. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR - CHARLES 3 PETALING JAYA

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE WAS INVITED AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF HEADS OF COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENTS BUT SINCE HE WAS NOT GIVEN SUCH A MANDATE HIS PRESENCE THERE WOULD ONLY BE AS HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA.

HE SAID HE WOULD LEAVE FOR LUSAKA AFTER ATTENDING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF PARLIAMENT ON MONDAY.

ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD INVITE MANDELA TO VISIT MALAYSIA, HE SAID +MAYBE IN THE FUTURE WHEN HE IS LESS BUSY WE HOPE, OF COURSE, THAT HE CAN MAKE A VISIT TO MALAYSIA.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WELCOMED THE DECISION OF THE SULTAN OF SELANGOR TO FORGIVE MENTERI BESAR TAN SRI HAJI MUHAMMAD TAIB AND TO RESTORE THE TITLE OF +DATUK+ TO HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTER, ENCIK LEE KIM SAI.

THE DECISION PROVED THAT THE SULTAN CONSIDERED THE MATTER RATIONALLY, HE SAID, ADDING THAT HE DID NOT SEE ANY POLITICAL +SIGNIFICANCE+ IN THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT. -- MORE
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HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT PLAY ANY ROLE IN THE MATTER AND THAT IT WAS THE PREROGATIVE OF THE SULTAN TO MAKE A DECISION RELATING TO CONFERMENT OF STATE AWARDS.

HE DECLINED TO COMMENT ON THE STATEMENT BY SOLICITOR-GENERAL, DATUK ABDUL AZIZ MOHAMAD, THAT ACTION WOULD NOT BE TAKEN AGAINST THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL TAN SRI ABDUL TALIB OTHMAN ON THE DESTRUCTION OF VIDEO TAPES STOLEN FROM THE RESIDENCE OF DEWAN RAKYAT DEPUTY SPEAKER ENCIK D.P.VIJANDRAN.

+THAT IS THEIR DISCRETION. I HAVE NO COMMENTS,+ HE SAID. --
BERNAMA
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