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U E838 AAE

MAHATHIR-UMNO (RPTING TO CORRECT SECOND PARA) R R R

BM

KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 3⁹⁰ (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY HE IS CONFIDENT THAT UMNO CANDIDATES WILL TRIUMPH IN THE COMING GENERAL ELECTION AS PROVEN BY AN ELECTION DRY-RUN CONDUCTED BY THE PARTY.

THE PRIME MINISTER WHO IS ALSO UMNO PRESIDENT SAID THE TWO-WEEK EXERCISE LAST MONTH WAS CARRIED OUT SIMULTANEOUSLY IN ALL THE STATES.

+I AM SATISFIED WITH THE REPORT WHICH I HAVE RECEIVED...GOD WILLING, WE WILL WIN OUR PARLIAMENTARY AND STATE SEATS, INCLUDING THOSE IN KELANTAN,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER CHAIRING THE PARTY'S SUPREME COUNCIL MEETING HERE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH THE DRY-RUN SHOWED THAT THE PARTY MACHINERY WAS ALL GEARED UP, THE VARIOUS STATE UMNO LIAISON COMMITTEES HAVE BEEN DIRECTED TO ENSURE THAT THEIR RESPECTIVE ELECTION TEAMS WERE FURTHER STRENGTHENED.

HE SAID THE IDEA FOR THE DRY-RUN WAS BASED ON A SIMILAR EXERCISE HELD IN PREPARATION FOR LAST YEAR'S COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING (CHOGM) HERE AND WAS AIMED AT PINPOINTING AND REMEDYING WEAKNESSES AS WELL AS TO TEST THE PARTY'S READINESS FOR THE ELECTION.-- MORE

1704MST 03 03 90

U E832 AAE
MAHATHIR-UMNO 2 KUALA LUMPUR

WHEN ASKED TO ELABORATE ON THE DRY-RUN, HE SAID IT WAS A SIMULATION OF THE GENERAL ELECTION AND DECLINED TO PROVIDE DETAILS AS +IT IS A PARTY SECRET+.

HE ADDED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG IN HOLDING THE DRY-RUN AS IT DID NOT INVOLVE THE GOVERNMENT.

COMMENTING ON OPPOSITION PARTIES' CRITICISMS OVER THE EXERCISE, HE SAID THERE WAS NOTHING SINISTER ABOUT IT AND THE OPPOSITION TOO COULD CONDUCT SIMILAR DRY-RUNS, IF THEY WISHED.

TO A QUESTION WHETHER THE BARISAN NASIONAL (BN) WOULD DO SO, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WHO IS ALSO CHAIRMAN OF THE COALITION, SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS IT WITH LEADERS OF ITS COMPONENT PARTIES.

IF THE BN FELT THE EXERCISE WAS NECESSARY, IT COULD BE HELD, HE SAID.-- MORE

1645MST 03 03 90

U E839 AAE
MAHATHIR-UMNO 3 KUALA LUMPUR

TO ANOTHER QUESTION, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT IN GENERAL, THE BN WAS READY BUT +WE WANT TO BE WELL PREPARED+.

TODAY'S MEETING LASTED MORE THAN FOUR HOURS AS ALL STATE UMNO LIAISON COMMITTEE HEADS PRESENTED THEIR RESPECTIVE REPORTS ON THE DRY-RUN.

REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTION ACT, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE MOVE WAS TO ENSURE THAT ELECTION WAS NOT A SUBJECT TO FOOL AROUND WITH AS THIS WOULD INVOLVE PUBLIC FUNDS.

HE EXPLAINED THAT UNDER THE AMENDED ACT, THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD IN WHICH AN ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE IS BARRED FROM RECONTESTING THE SEAT HE VACATED, IS EFFECTIVE FROM THE DATE OF HIS RESIGNATION AND NOT FROM ELECTION DAY.

THE AMENDED ACT, HOWEVER, ALLOWS A STATE ASSEMBLY MEMBER WHO RESIGNED TO STAND FOR A PARLIAMENTARY SEAT AND FOR AN MP WHO QUIT, TO CONTEST IN A STATE CONSTITUENCY.-- MORE

1713MST 03 03 90

U E844 AAE
MAHATHIR-UMNO 4 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE LAW BARRING AN ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE FROM RECONTESTING THE SAME SEAT COVERED INDIVIDUALS AND NOT THE PARTY THEY REPRESENT, WHICH MEANT THAT EVEN IF THEY WERE TO SWITCH PARTIES, THEY WERE STILL BOUND BY IT.

HE SAID TODAY'S MEETING ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED DATUK SHAHRIR ABDUL SAMAD'S VICTORY OVER JOHOR STATE ASSEMBLY SPEAKER DATUK YUNUS SULAIMAN IN THE CONTEST FOR THE JOHOR BAHARU UMNO DIVISIONAL HEAD YESTERDAY.-- BERNAMA

1727MST 03 03 90