

U E820 AAE
MAHATHIR-UMNO
BM

IPOH, MARCH 11 (BERNAMA)-- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY UMNO MEMBERS SHOULD NOT BICKER OVER THE ELECTION OF PARTY LEADERS BUT INSTEAD SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON THE COMING GENERAL ELECTION.

+NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO BICKER OVER WHO SHOULD BE AT THE PARTY'S HELM,+ THE PRIME MINISTER SAID AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE SULTAN AZLAN SHAH AIRPORT HERE TO MARK THE END OF HIS THREE-DAY VISIT TO PERAK.

ASKED WHETHER THE UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY WOULD BE HELD BEFORE OR AFTER THE GENERAL ELECTION, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WHO IS ALSO UMNO PRESIDENT, SAID THIS WAS NOT IMPORTANT AS WHAT WAS MORE ESSENTIAL WAS THE PARTY'S READINESS TO GO TO THE POLLS.

EARLIER, WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON A STATEMENT BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ENCIK GHAFAR BABA THAT FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DATUK MUSA HITAM WOULD BE ABLE TO SERVE MORE EFFECTIVELY IF HE BECOMES AT LEAST AN UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: +WE WILL NOT REJECT (DATUK MUSA'S NOMINATION)...IT IS UP TO THE MEMBERS TO DECIDE,+ HE SAID.

+AS AN UMNO MEMBER, DATUK MUSA HAS THE RIGHT TO CONTEST,+ HE SAID, WITHOUT ELABORATING. DATUK MUSA, A FORMER DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF UMNO, WAS REPORTED LAST MONTH TO HAVE SAID THAT HE WAS WILLING TO VIE FOR ONE OF THE THREE POSTS OF PARTY VICE-PRESIDENT. -- MORE
1459MST 11 03 90

U E823 AAE
MAHATHIR-UMNO 2 IPOH

HE ALSO EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE BARISAN NASIONAL IN PERAK WOULD SCORE A COMFORTABLE VICTORY IN THE COMING ELECTION.

APART FROM BEING ABLE TO BE RETURNED TO POWER IN THE STATE, THE BN IN PERAK WILL ALSO RETAIN ALL ITS PARLIAMENTARY SEATS, HE SAID. DURING HIS VISIT HERE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MET LEADERS OF THE BN AND THE STATE UMNO LIAISON COMMITTEE.

HE SAID THE BN COULD EXPERIENCE A LOWER MAJORITY IN CERTAIN AREAS BUT IN OTHER CONSTITUENCIES THE COALITION COULD ENJOY MORE VOTES. HE DID NOT NAME THESE SEATS.

IN THE PREVIOUS GENERAL ELECTION IN 1986, THE BN WON 19 OF THE 23 PARLIAMENTARY SEATS IN PERAK. TWO OF ITS MPS HAVE SINCE JOINED THE OPPOSITION SEMANGAT 46 PARTY.

FOR STATE SEATS, THE BN CAPTURED 33 OF THE 46 AREAS WITH THE REST GOING TO THE DAP. ONE OF THE SUCCESSFUL BN CANDIDATES HAS JOINED THE SEMANGAT 46.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE STATE'S ECONOMIC GROWTH, ESPECIALLY IN THE TOURISM SECTOR, WHERE THE STATE GOVERNMENT WAS ABLE TO DEVELOP THEIR POTENTIALS.-- MORE
1518MST 11 03 90

U E828 AAE
MAHATHIR-UMNO 3 IPOH

BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WENT TO GOPENG TO INSPECT A PLATFORM FOR VISITORS TO VIEW THE OPERATIONS OF A TIN MINE.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR WAS ALSO RAPIDLY EXPANDING WITH MORE FACTORIES COMING UP AND HOPED IT WOULD BE ABLE TO ABSORB ALL THOSE WHO LOST THEIR JOBS AS A RESULT OF THE CLOSURE OF MINES.

LAST NIGHT, THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS WIFE, DATUK SERI DATIN SERI DR SITI HASMAH SANG A SONG EACH AT A PERAK WANITA UMNO DINNER HERE AND HELPED RAISE \$45,000 FOR THE MOVEMENT'S FUND.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SANG THE EVERGREEN P. RAMLEE HIT +GETARAN JIWA+ WHILE HIS WIFE RENDERED +ANAK PERANTAU+.

IN HIS SPEECH, THE PRIME MINISTER HAILED THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN MALAY POLITICS AND SAID AN OPPOSITION PARTY WHICH ONCE LOOKED DOWN ON THEIR ROLE, HAD SINCE REALISED SUCH IMPORTANCE AND GAVE THEM A MORE PROMINENT PART DURING THE TELUK PASU BY-ELECTION WHICH THEY WON.

EARLIER, WANITA UMNO LEADER DATUK SERI RAFIDAH AZIZ QUIPPED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD ALLOCATE MORE SEATS TO WOMEN BECAUSE THEY FORMED ALMOST 50 PER CENT OF THE UMNO MEMBERSHIP.-- BERNAMA
1542MST 11 03 90