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MAHATHIR-MOTORISTS
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KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 23 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT MAY CONSIDER TIGHTENING CONDITIONS FOR THE ISSUANCE OF DRIVING LICENCES BY INTRODUCING MORE STRINGENT TESTS IN ITS EFFORTS TO REDUCE ROAD ACCIDENTS, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID TESTS, ESPECIALLY ON ROAD ETHICS, AND DRIVING COURSES COULD BE INTRODUCED BECAUSE MANY ACCIDENTS WERE CAUSED BY ANGRY, IMPATIENT AND FIERCE DRIVERS.

+I CAN GUARANTEE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE MORE FACILITIES TO HELP REDUCE ACCIDENTS,+ HE SAID IN AN INTERVIEW WITH RTM.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO HEADS THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY, SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD MANY IDEAS WHICH COULD HELP CUT DOWN ROAD ACCIDENTS BUT IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS IT ALL DEPENDED ON THE ATTITUDE OF THE ROAD USERS.

THE ACCIDENT RATE IN OTHER COUNTRIES WITH A HIGHER TRAFFIC VOLUME WAS FAR LOWER COMPARED WITH MALAYSIA, HE ADDED.

THIS WAS BECAUSE ROAD USERS IN THOSE COUNTRIES HAD A SENSE OF ETHICS WHEN DRIVING= THEY WERE WILLING TO GIVE WAY TO OTHER MOTORISTS, THEY WERE NOT HASTY AND THEY DID NOT ALWAYS SPEED.

CITING JAPAN WHICH HAS A CAR POPULATION OF CLOSE TO 55 MILLION, AS AN EXAMPLE, HE SAID IN A COUNTRY WITH A RATIO OF ONE CAR TO TWO PERSONS THE NUMBER OF ROAD ACCIDENTS DID NOT MULTIPLY BECAUSE OF IT.

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STATISTICALLY SPEAKING, THE RATE OF ACCIDENTS IN JAPAN SHOULD BE 55 TIMES THAT OF MALAYSIA WHERE THERE WERE ONE MILLION CARS, HE ADDED.

IT WAS THE SAME IN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE, HE POINTED OUT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID: +IN THIS MATTER, WE ALWAYS THINK THE OTHER DRIVER IS WRONG. WE SHOULD ASK OURSELVES IF WE, TOO, ARE WRONG.+

HE SAID AMONG THE MEASURES WHICH WOULD BE INTRODUCED TO HELP CUT DOWN ACCIDENTS WOULD BE TO ERECT ROAD DIVIDERS AND WARNING SIGNS, STEP UP PATROLS AND REPAIR AND STRAIGHTEN DANGEROUS STRETCHES OR ROADS.

+SOMETIMES WHEN WE STRAIGHTEN A ROAD, THEY DRIVE FASTER AND THIS CAUSES ACCIDENTS, TOO,+ HE SAID, ADDING THAT IT WAS LEFT TO THE DRIVERS THEMSELVES TO CORRECT THEIR ATTITUDE.

ACCORDING TO HIM, A MEEK AND WELL-MANNERED PERSON COULD CHANGE INTO A DIFFERENT PERSON ALTOGETHER WHEN HE GOT BEHIND THE WHEEL.

TO THOSE WHO ARE PLANNING TO DRIVE BACK TO THEIR HOMETOWNS DURING THE HARI RAYA RUSH, HE ADVISED THEM TO BE CAREFUL WHEN ON THE ROAD, SAYING +IT'S BETTER TO BE LATE THAN DEAD+.

+EVEN IF WE SPEED, WE ARE FASTER ONLY BY A MATTER OF MINUTES. IF SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT IT TAKES 13 HOURS TO GET FROM KUALA LUMPUR TO IPOH (A DISTANCE OF 209KM), I WOULD SAY, NEVER MIND EVEN IF IT TAKES 13 HOURS, IT IS BETTER TO GET THERE THAN NOT AT ALL.+

+THIS, WE HAVE TO BEAR IN MIND+, HE SAID. -- BERNAMA
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