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R E897 AAE  
MAHATHIR-PRESS  
BM

EMBARGO: FOR RELEASE AFTER 10.30PM TODAY, JUNE 15  
PETALING JAYA, JUNE 15 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR  
MOHAMAD SAID TONIGHT THAT THE PRESS IN THE COUNTRY IS FREE TO EITHER  
CRITICISE OR SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT.

PRESS FREEDOM DID NOT ONLY MEAN THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD BE  
CRITICISED BUT ALSO FREEDOM TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT, THE PRIME  
MINISTER ADDED.

HE ALSO SAID THERE IS A VIEW THAT IF THE PRESS SUPPORTED THE  
GOVERNMENT, IT WAS AN INDICATION OF A LACK OF FREEDOM AND IF THE  
PRESS OPPOSED THE GOVERNMENT, IT IS CONSIDERED FREE, ALTHOUGH IT DID  
SO OUT OF FEAR OF CERTAIN GROUPS OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT OR IT  
WORRIED IT WOULD NOT BE POPULAR AND THE NEWSPAPERS WOULD NOT SELL  
WELL.

+THEREFORE, SUCH NEWSPAPERS ARE ALSO NOT FREE,+ HE ADDED, WHEN  
SPEAKING AT THE NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS (NUJ) DINNER AT THE  
PETALING JAYA HILTON HOTEL.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IN DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES IN THE WEST,  
THERE ARE PRO-GOVERNMENT AND ANTI-GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPERS.

+BUT BECAUSE THERE ARE THREE OR FOUR NEWSPAPERS IN MALAYSIA  
WHICH DO MAKE WILD CRITICISM, THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT IS ACCUSED OF  
NOT UPHOLDING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS,+ HE ADDED, -- MORE  
2133MST 13 06 90

D148

R E898 AAE  
MAHATHIR-PRESS 2 PETALING JAYA (EMBARGO)

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THERE ARE MANY NEWSPAPERS IN THE COUNTRY  
WHICH ARE ANTI-GOVERNMENT AND PUBLISHED \*HIGHLY ADVERSE+ REPORTS AND  
INSINUATIONS.

HE ADDED: +THESE NEWSPAPERS ALSO REPORT BLATANT LIES. BUT THEY  
STILL EXIST.

. +THE EXISTENCE OF THESE NEWSPAPERS IN MALAYSIA ALSO DOES NOT  
STOP CERTAIN PEOPLE FROM MAKING ALLEGATIONS THAT THE PRESS IS NOT  
FREE. IN SHORT, WHATEVER THE WEST DOES IS NOT WRONG, BUT, IF  
MALAYSIA AND THE OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES DO THE SAME THING, THEY  
ARE WRONG.+

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID FOREIGN JOURNALISTS AND OTHERS ONLY  
READ SOME ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS WHICH SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT AND THEN  
ALLEGED THAT THERE IS NO PRESS FREEDOM IN THE COUNTRY.

CERTAIN GROUPS IN MALAYSIA BLINDLY AGREE WITH THEM AND SAY +YES,  
OF COURSE THERE IS NO FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN MALAYSIA.+

THIS, HE SAID, ONLY REFLECTED THE COLONIAL MENTALITY OF THESE  
PEOPLE WHO ONLY ACT AS AN +ECHO+ OR +MYNAH WHICH IS GOOD AT  
MIMICKING\* BUT LACK THE ABILITY TO EXPRESS THEIR OWN VIEWS AND JUST  
ACCEPT EVERYTHING UTTERED BY THE FOREIGNERS. -- MORE

2135MST 15 06 90

0158

R E908 AAE  
MAHATHIR-PRESS 3 PETALING JAYA (EMBARGO)

+AND WHEN THE FOREIGNERS DENY SOMETHING, THEY TOO FOLLOW SUIT AND DENY. DON'T THEY HAVE PRIDE? THIS SHOWS TO WHAT EXTENT THEIR THINKING IS SHACKLED, SO MUCH SO, WHEN THE FOREIGNERS PROPOSED THAT OUR TRADE PRIVILEGES UNDER THE GENERALISED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES (GSP) BE WITHDRAWN, THEY TOO JOINED THEM. MENTAL COLONIALISM IS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN PHYSICAL COLONIALISM.

+THE STARK FACT IS THAT FREEDOM OF THE PRESS DOES NOT EXIST ANYWHERE, BE IT IN LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES OR IN COUNTRIES WITH A DICTATORSHIP,+ HE ADDED.

HE SAID NEWS AND FEATURES IN THE MASS MEDIA IN LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES ARE CONTROLLED BY CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO HELD POWER, PARTICULARLY IN THE MEDIA.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT WHEN HE WAS IN NEW YORK TO ADDRESS THE UNITED NATIONS, ADVERSE REPORTS ON MALAYSIA WERE PUBLISHED IN THE WALL STREET JOURNAL AND THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL BUT NOT A WORD OF HIS SPEECH APPEARED IN THE WALL STREET JOURNAL OR ANY MAJOR NEWSPAPER IN THE UNITED STATES.

IN CONTRAST, THEIR DIGNITARIES WHO VISIT MALAYSIA, HAD EVERYTHING THEY UTTERED ARE PUBLISHED AT LENGTH BY THE NEWSPAPERS IN MALAYSIA, HE ADDED.

+WHO IS PRACTISING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, THEY OR US?+ HE ASKED.

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R E911A A E  
MAHATHIR-PRESS 4 PETALING JAYA (EMBARGO)

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID A NUMBER OF NATIONAL HEADS AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS AND OFFICIALS WHO ATTENDED THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT (CHOGM) AND GROUP OF 15 (G15) MEETINGS HERE REMARKED THAT THEY FOUND MALAYSIA DEVELOPED, PEACEFUL AND SOPHISTICATED, UNLIKE THE PICTURE THEY GOT FROM REPORTS BY WESTERN NEWS AGENCIES.

HE SAID EVEN THOUGH THERE MIGHT BE NUJ MEMBERS WHO ARE ANTI-GOVERNMENT, EVERY UNION MEMBER SHOULD AT LEAST HAVE A FEELING OF PATRIOTISM TOWARDS MALAYSIA.

HE ADDED: +WE SHOULD NOT DISCREDIT THE COUNTRY AND OUR OWN PEOPLE AND BECOME TOOLS OF THE FOREIGN PRESS JUST BECAUSE WE DO NOT LIKE THE GOVERNMENT.

+LET US NOT STOOP TO WRITING BASELESS REPORTS JUST BECAUSE THE FOREIGN PRESS DO NOT LIKE WHATEVER IS POSITIVE IN COUNTRIES WHERE THEY DO NOT WIELD POWER ANYMORE. LET US NOT SELL OUR PRIDE FOR MONEY.+

URGING THE PRESS TO HOLD STEADFAST TO THE TRUTH, HE SAID TO LET ITSELF BE INFLUENCED BY FEELINGS OF HATRED TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT OR BY MONEY WOULD BE TO DENY PRESS FREEDOM. -- MORE

2200MST 15 06 90

D164

R E913A A E

MAHATHIR-PRESS 5 PETALING JAYA (EMBARGO)

+DO NOT THINK THAT ONLY THE GOVERNMENT CAN THWART PRESS FREEDOM. OWNERS, DIRECTORS, EDITORS! FINANCIAL INTERESTS, POPULARITY MOTIVATION -- ALL THESE CAN OBSTRUCT PRESS FREEDOM,+ HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT LEADERS DID NOT POSSESS ABSOLUTE POWER AND THE PEOPLE COULD REPLACE THE GOVERNMENT WHILE THE COURTS TOO COULD NULLIFY GOVERNMENT DECISIONS.

THEREFORE, THE PRESS IN THIS COUNTRY SHOULD ACCEPT CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT AIMED AT DENYING PRESS FREEDOM BUT TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY, HE ADDED. -- BERNAMA

2205MST 15 06 90