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MAHATHIR-SABAH  
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KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 16 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THE RECENT ARREST OF THREE PEOPLE IN SABAH UNDER THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT (ISA) IS NOT POLITICALLY MOTIVATED.

THE ARREST OF FORMER POLICE DETECTIVE DAMIT UNDIKAI, FORMER POLICE OFFICER ALBINUS UDAH AND THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF KADAZAN/DUSUN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION BARNABAS TOPIN ALIAS BENEDICT, WAS ROUTINE ACTION TAKEN IN LINE WITH PROCEDURES AND FREE OF ANY POLITICAL AIMS, HE ADDED.

+IF STUDIED FROM THE ASPECT OF SENTIMENTS OF THE SABAH PEOPLE, THE ARREST IS NOT IN THE INTEREST OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BECAUSE IT WILL AROUSE HATRED FOR THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER CHAIRING A MEETING OF THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL HERE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS UMNO PRESIDENT, SAID THAT AS A POLITICIAN, HE OR ANYONE ELSE, DID NOT HAVE THE POWER TO DECIDE WHO SHOULD BE ARRESTED AND OR NOT.

THE ARREST OF THE THREE SABAH MEN IS SAID TO HAVE BECOME AN ISSUE IN THE RUN-UP TO THE STATE ELECTION. PEOPLE IN SABAH GO TO THE POLLS ON JULY 16 AND 17.

+IT IS LEFT TO THE OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING THE ACTION AND, IN THIS CASE, THEY HAVE TAKEN ACTION WHICH, FROM THE POLITICAL ASPECT, IS A BLOW TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT,+ HE ADDED. -- MORE

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MAHATHIR-SABAH 2 KUALA LUMPUR

THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF POLICE, TAN SRI HANIFF OMAR, SAID RECENTLY THAT THE THREE MEN WERE ARRESTED UNDER THE ISA FOR ALLEGEDLY TRYING TO TAKE SABAH OUT OF MALAYSIA AND THAT THE POLICE HAD BEEN MONITORING THEIR ACTIVITIES SINCE 1987.

THE ARREST HAS BECOME A HOT ISSUE IN THE STATE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND SABAH CHIEF MINISTER DATUK JOSEPH PAIRIN KITINGAN HIMSELF QUESTIONED IT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IF EVERYONE WANTED GOVERNMENT OFFICERS NOT TO BE COWED BY POLITICIANS THEN SUCH MATTERS SHOULD NOT BE A CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT.

+THERE ARE CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO COMMIT OFFENCES AND, BECAUSE OF THEM, THEIR POLITICIANS FEEL THAT THE ACTION IS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED,+ HE ADDED.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT IN SUCH MATTERS THE RELEVANT PEOPLE SHOULD ASCERTAIN WHETHER AN OFFENCE HAD INDEED BEEN COMMITTED AND, IF SO, TO ENSURE THAT NECESSARY ACTION IS TAKEN WITHOUT ANY FEAR OR FAVOUR.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT WAS UNFAIR FOR ANYONE TO THINK THAT IF GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS ARE ARRESTED IT MEANT THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS IMPARTIAL OR IF SOMEONE FROM OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT PARTY IS ARRESTED IT MEANT THE GOVERNMENT IS BIASED. -- MORE

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MAHATHIR-SABAH 3 KUALA LUMPUR

HE STRESSED THAT OFFICERS FROM THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT, ANTI CORRUPTION AGENCY (ACA) OR THE POLICE WERE FREE TO TAKE ACTION BASED ON THEIR DISCRETION AND POWERS AND THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT OBSTRUCT THEM FROM DISCHARGING THEIR DUTIES.

+UHNO PEOPLE WERE ALSO DETAINED UNDER THE ISA LAST TIME AND WHEN THEY CAME OUT THEY BECAME ANGRY OVER THE MOVE AND JOINED PART 46, + HE SAID.

I THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO TOUCHED ON SABAH'S CALL TO BE GIVEN A LARGER SHARE OF ROYALTY FROM OIL REVENUE DERIVED FROM THE STATE.

HE SAID THAT THE PORTION OF ROYALTY GIVEN TO SABAH IS FAIR. THE PRESENT 5 PER CENT ROYALTY FROM THE GROSS OIL INCOME IN SABAH IS BIG ENOUGH, + HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE OIL RESOURCES FOUND IN VARIOUS STATES, INCLUDING SABAH, IS CONSIDERED A NATIONAL ASSET AND INCOME DERIVED FROM IT SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED FAIRLY AMONG ALL STATES.

IT SO HAPPENED THAT OIL IS FOUND IN CERTAIN PLACES, INCLUDING SABAH, HE ADDED.

HE SAID IF PREVIOUSLY OIL REVENUE FROM TERENGGANU AND SARAWAK WAS ALSO ALLOCATED FOR SABAH'S DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT ANY PROTEST FROM SABAH ITSELF, THEN IT IS ONLY FAIR THAT THE SAME THING IS DONE WITH OIL REVENUE FROM THAT STATE. -- BERNAMA

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