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PARLIAMENT-RELIGION
BM

KUALA LUMPUR, J U N E 21 (BERNAMA) -- THE PRIME MINISTER SAID TODAY MALAYSIA DID NOT NEED A JOINT COUNCIL OF ALL RELIGIONS TO SAFEGUARD RELIGIOUS HARMONY IN THE COUNTRY.

+WE HAVE THE NATIONAL UNITY COUNCIL, WHOSE MEMBERS ALSO INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS RELIGIONS, TO RESOLVE ANY PROBLEMS 'AND PRESERVE HARMONY,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATI-R HOHAHAD TOLD ENCIK LEE LAM THYE (BN-BUKIT BINTANG) IN THE DEWAN RAKYAT THAT DIALOGUES BETWEEN THE GROUPS WAS NOT NECESSARY BECAUSE IT WOULD NOT SOLVE ANY PROBLEM.

HE POINTED OUT THAT EACH RELIGION HELD DIFFERING BELIEFS AND PHILOSOPHIES, THUS, MAKING IT DIFFICULT UNDERSTANDING TO BE REACHED ON ANY TOPIC IN THE DIALOGUE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HOHAMAD STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT ADOPTED AN OPEN ATTITUDE TO VIEWS FROM ANY RELIGIOUS GROUP AS LONG AS THEY COMPLIED WITH THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION TO ENSURE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM. -- MORE
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PARLIAMENT-RELIGION 2 KUALA LUHPUR

HE TOLD ENCIK LIH KIT SIANG (DAP-TANJUNG) THAT HIS MEETING WITH THE BUDDHIST, CHRISTIAN, HINDU AND SIKH CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL IN APRIL THIS YEAR ENABLED HIM TO EXPLAIN THE GOVERNMENT'S STAND ON THESE ISSUES.

THEY HAD A CHANCE TO HAVE A HEART-TO-HEART TALK ON ISSUES THEY WERE NOT HAPPY WITH, HE ADDED.

HOWEVER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR DECLINED TO ELABORATE ON THE TOPICS RAISED BY THE COUNCIL, SAYING: +IT COULD OPEN SENSITIVE ISSUES WHICH SHOULD NOT BE DEBATED BY THE MULTI-RELIGIOUS PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY .+

HE SAID: +RELIGIOUS RIOTS DO NOT OCCUR IN THIS COUNTRY AND TALK ON RELIGIOUS ISSUES BY THE PEOPLE WILL NOT HELP MAINTAIN NATIONAL STABILITY.+

TO DR GOH CHENG TEIK (BN-NIBONG TEBAL), HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDED PROPER CHANNELS FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS RELIGIOUS GROUPS TO AIR THEIR VIEWS AND CRITICISM.

+WHAT IS FEARED IS POLITICAL INTERVENTION USING THE RELIGIOUS GROUPS AS A MEANS TO SEEK POPULARITY,+ HE WARNED. -- BERNAMA
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