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R E382 AAE  
MAHATHIR - TEAM

KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 25 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO GO AHEAD WITH ITS PLAN TO INVITE THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER TEAM TO WITNESS THE COMING GENERAL ELECTION, THE PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD ANNOUNCED HERE TODAY.

HE SAID THE DECISION WAS MADE AT TODAY'S MEETING OF THE CABINET AFTER IT REVIEWED AN EARLIER DECISION TO INVITE THE TEAM.

THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD NEWSMEN HERE THAT AN INVITATION LETTER WOULD BE SENT TO THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT IN LONDON SOON.

HE SAID THE OBSERVERS WOULD HAVE TO CONFINE THEIR ROLE TO OBSERVING THE ELECTIONS JUST LIKE ANY OTHER FOREIGN OBSERVERS WITNESSING ELECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN OR OTHER COUNTRIES.

+THEY SHOULD NOT COME ON TERMS SET BY THEM,+ HE ADDED.

LAST WEEK, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT INVITING THE OBSERVERS BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THAT THE ELECTION WATCH, HEADED BY FORMER LORD PRESIDENT TUN MOHAMMED SUFFIAN HASHIM, HAD INFLUENCED THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL TO SEND TWO REPRESENTATIVES TO MALAYSIA. -- MORE

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ELABORATING ON THIS, HE SAID HE HAD EVIDENCE. IN THE FIRST PLACE, HE SAID, THE TWO REPRESENTATIVES -- COMMONWEALTH DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL, SIR ANTHONY SIAGURU, AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION, DR. NEVILLE LINTON, CAME TO MALAYSIA EVEN BEFORE THE FORMAL INVITATION WAS EXTENDED TO THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT.

NEVERTHELESS, THE GOVERNMENT AGREED TO RECEIVE THEM AFTER THE SECRETARIAT TELEPHONED HIM AND INFORMED HIM THAT THE REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE HERE TO TALK TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION AND POLITICAL PARTIES, INCLUDING THE OPPOSITION PARTIES, HE ADDED.

+BUT WHEN THEY MET ME, THEY ALSO TOLD ME THAT THEY ARE GOING TO MEET ELECTION WATCH. THIS WAS NOT INDICATED TO ME EARLIER,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID HIS SUSPICION ABOUT THE LINKS BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATIVES AND ELECTION WATCH WAS FURTHER AROUSED BY A LETTER SENT TO THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT BY TUN MOHAMMED SUFFIAN IN WHICH CERTAIN PRE-REQUISITES WERE LAID DOWN FOR THE OBSERVER TEAM. -- MORE

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MAHATHIR - TEAM 3 KUALA LUMPUR

AMONG THE PRE-REQUISITES WERE THAT THE OBSERVER TEAM SHOULD:-  
+ HAVE ACCESS TO THE REPORTS ON GENERAL ELECTIONS AND  
BY-ELECTIONS PREPARED BY THE ELECTION COMMISSION AND TO ANY OTHER  
DOCUMENT IT MAY REQUEST FROM THE COMMISSION,  
+ HAVE ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS CONTAINING THE VARIOUS ELECTORAL  
GRIEVANCES OF THE LAST FOUR YEARS (SINCE THE 1986 GENERAL ELECTIONS)  
BROUGHT TO THE NOTICE OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION,  
+ MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL POLITICAL PARTIES INVOLVED IN  
THE ELECTIONS, INCLUDING THE OPPOSITION. THE TEAM SHOULD RECEIVE AND  
EXAMINE DOCUMENTS AND MEMORANDA FROM POLITICAL PARTIES

AELECTION  
CANDIDATES PERTAINING TO THE CONDUCT OF THE ELECTIONS,  
+ ALSO BE ALLOWED TO FIND OUT WHETHER IN THE ACTUAL COMPETITION  
FOR POWER THE DIFFERENT POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO  
THE DAILY NEWSPAPERS, RADIO AND TELEVISION, AND  
+ SHOULD BE EXPECTED TO PREPARE A REPORT ON THE CONDUCT OF THE  
GENERAL ELECTION IN MALAYSIA AND MAKE THE REPORT PUBLIC.

THE PRIME MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT FROM THE TONE OF THE LETTER  
AND ON THE BASIS OF THE INSISTENCE OF THE TWO COMMONWEALTH  
REPRESENTATIVES TO MEET THE ELECTION WATCH, IT APPEARED TO THE  
GOVERNMENT THAT THE ROLE OF THE OBSERVERS WAS TO BE TURNED INTO THAT  
OF AN INVESTIGATION TEAM PROBING INTO THE CONDUCT OF MALAYSIAN  
ELECTIONS SINCE 1986. -- MORE  
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HE SAID EVEN IF THE HIDDEN INTENTION WAS SUCH, HE FAILED TO UNDERSTAND WHY 1986 WAS MADE THE STARTING POINT, ALTHOUGH ELECTIONS HAD BEEN HELD IN MALAYSIA SINCE 1955.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THIS CLEARLY SHOWED THE ILL-INTENTION BEHIND THE SETTING UP OF ELECTION WATCH.

HE SAID HE SUSPECTED FROM THE VERY BEGINNING THAT THE GROUP WAS SET UP TO DISCREDIT THE GOVERNMENT.

HE ADDED: +THEIR INTENTION IS TO LOOK FOR FAULTS AND EXCUSES TO DECLARE THE WHOLE OR PARTS OF THE ELECTION NULL AND VOID.

+IF IT IS SO, WHAT DO WE DO NEXT? ARE WE GOING TO CALL FOR ANOTHER ELECTION AND ANOTHER ELECTION?+.

THE PRIME MINISTER REITERATED THAT THERE WAS NO REASON WHATSOEVER FOR ANYONE TO CAST ANY DOUBT ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS IN MALAYSIA.

+OVER THE YEARS, THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES HAVE WON AND LOST. EVERYONE ACCEPT THE RESULTS IN GOOD FAITH,+ HE SAID. -- BERNAMA  
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