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R E774 AAE
MAHATHIR-SABAH
BM

KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 14 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY INDICATED THE POSSIBILITY OF PARTI BERSATU SABAH (PBS) AND USNO CONTESTING AGAINST EACH OTHER IF THEY DO NOT REACH A CONSENSUS ON THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO REPRESENT THE BARISAN NASIONAL IN SABAH IN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES WAS NOT AN EASY TASK BECAUSE BOTH HAD DIFFERING VIEWS ON THE MATTER.

HOWEVER, THE BN WOULD STRIVE TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEM, SAID DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS BN CHAIRMAN.

+WE WILL FIND A WAY TO RESOLVE IT EITHER BY ALLOCATING SEATS OR, IF NECESSARY, BY ALLOWING THEM TO CONTEST AGAINST EACH OTHER,+ HE TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE KUALA LUMPUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON HIS RETURN FROM A FOUR-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO SOUTH KOREA.

+IF THEY AGREE ON THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS, THEY CAN CONTEST USING THE BN SYMBOL. BUT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO USE THE BN SYMBOL IF THEY CONTEST AGAINST EACH OTHER,+ HE SAID. -- MORE
1915MST 14 09 90

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R E782 AAE
MAHATHIR-SABAH 2 KUALA LUMPUR

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IT WOULD NOT MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHICH OF THE PARTIES WON BECAUSE BOTH WERE BN COMPONENTS.

IN THE GENERAL ELECTION IN 1986, THE PBS AND USNO CONTESTED ON THE BN TICKET. ALTHOUGH BOTH PARTIES ARE BN COMPONENTS, THE PBS IS THE RULING PARTY IN THE STATE WHILE USNO IS THE OPPOSITION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE BN POSITION IN SABAH WITH CHIEF MINISTER DATUK JOSEPH PAIRIN KITINGAN WHO WAS IN HIS DELEGATION TO SOUTH KOREA.

HE SAID DATUK PAIRIN, WHO IS PBS PRESIDENT, HAD SAID THAT HIS PARTY SHOULD BE ALLOCATED MORE SEATS BECAUSE OF ITS GOOD PERFORMANCE IN THE RECENT STATE ELECTION.

USNO MIGHT ALSO MAKE A SIMILAR CLAIM, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.

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1943MST 14 09 90

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R E791 AAE
MAHATHIR-SABAH 3 KUALA LUMPUR

PBS WON 36 OF THE TOTAL 48 SEATS IN THE STATE ELECTION IN JULY. USNO WON THE REMAINING 12. SABAH HAS 20 PARLIAMENTARY SEATS.

ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS WITH DATUK PAIRIN ON THE MATTER WHEN HE VISITED SABAH, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WOULD VISIT THE STATE BUT HAD TO SETTLE SEVERAL MATTERS BEFORE THE TRIP.

ON THE THIRD ROUND OF HIS VISIT TO ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING SABAH AND SARAWAK, HE SAID THE SCHEDULE WAS BEING ARRANGED BY HIS OFFICERS.

REPLYING TO ANOTHER QUESTION, HE SAID THE DATE OF THE BN SUPREME COUNCIL MEETING HAD YET TO BE SET.

ASKED ABOUT THE INVITATION TO THE ELECTION OBSERVER GROUP FROM THE COMMONWEALTH, HE SAID HE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM PARTI SEMANGAT 46 SECRETARY-GENERAL DATUK HAJI SUHAIMI KAMARUDDIN, WHO REPRESENTED THE OPPOSITION PARTIES, ON HIS RETURN FROM A VISIT TO VENEZUELA LAST MONTH. -- MORE

2013MST 14 09 90

R E794 AAE
MAHATHIR-SABAH 4 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID THE OPPOSITION HAD SUGGESTED THE SETTING UP OF A BODY WHICH HAD RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS SIMILAR TO A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT AGREE WITH THE SUGGESTION BECAUSE IT ONLY WANTED THE OBSERVER TEAM TO SEE WHETHER THE ELECTION WAS HELD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF THE COUNTRY.

HE SAID HE ASKED THE OPPOSITION TO REPLY WHETHER IT AGREED TO THIS BUT ADDED THAT HE HAD YET TO RECEIVE THE ANSWER.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD READ IN THE NEWSPAPERS THAT THE DAP PLANNED TO INVITE THE OBSERVER TEAM FROM THE COMMONWEALTH.

+THAT IS ITS RIGHT BUT THE GOVERNMENT AGREES TO INVITING THE OBSERVERS,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

2019MST 14 09 90

R E796 AAE
MAHATHIR-SABAH 5 KUALA LUMPUR

+WE HAVE INFORMED THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH THAT WE ARE STILL KEEN ON HAVING OBSERVERS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH UNLESS THE COMMONWEALTH FEELS THAT IT WILL ONLY SEND OBSERVERS IF THE OTHER PARTIES AGREE (TO HAVING OBSERVERS),+ HE SAID.

+IF THEY WANT THE AGREEMENT (OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES) BUT CANNOT GET IT, WE CANNOT DO ANYTHING,+ HE ADDED.

MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT DATUK DR MOHAMED YUSOF NOR, INFORMATION MINISTER DATUK MOHAMED RAHMAT, DEPUTY HOME MINISTER DATUK MEGAT JUNID MEGAT AYOB AND DEPUTY DEFENCE MINISTER DATUK ABANG ABU BAKAR MUSTAPHA WERE AMONG THOSE WHO WERE AT THE AIRPORT TO GREET THE PRIME MINISTER. -- BERNAMA

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