

MAHATHIR-DEMOCRACY

BM

KUANTAN, OCT 17, (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THAT IN A COUNTRY THAT PRACTISES DEMOCRACY THE PEOPLE HAVE THE CHOICE TO CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT OR RETAIN IT.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE ADVANTAGE OF A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM WAS THAT THE PEOPLE COULD DECIDE (THROUGH THE ELECTION PROCESS) TO CHANGE THE COUNTRY'S LEADERSHIP IF THEY FELT THAT A CHANGE WAS NEEDED.

+HOWEVER, WE SHOULD NOT CHANGE JUST FOR THE SAKE OF CHANGING BECAUSE THERE IS ALSO THE CHOICE OF RETAINING (THE GOVERNMENT),+ HE SAID WHEN ADDRESSING ABOUT 500 GOVERNMENT SERVANTS IN PAHANG AT THE KUANTAN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL HALL HERE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT A LEADER IN A COUNTRY THAT PRACTISED A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM WOULD DISCHARGE HIS DUTIES WELL BECAUSE HE WAS AWARE THAT WHETHER HE REMAINED A LEADER DEPENDED ON HIS TRACK RECORD.

HE ADDED: +SO, IF HE (THE LEADER) DISCHARGES HIS DUTIES WELL AND IS RESPONSIBLE, THEN THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSIBILITY IS TO ENSURE THAT SUCH A LEADER IS NOT TOPPLED.

+THAT IS DEMOCRACY WHICH GIVES ONE THE RIGHT TO STUDY THE GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE AND THEN TO DROP IT IF IT IS FELT THAT IT IS NOT QUALIFIED AND TO RETAIN IF IT IS QUALIFIED.+ -- MORE
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HE SAID THAT WHILE THE RULING PARTY DEPENDED ON ITS TRACK RECORD, THE OPPOSITION PARTIES HAD MADE PROMISES WHICH EVERY THINKING CITIZEN SHOULD STUDY CAREFULLY.

FROM THE PROMISES, HE SAID, NEARLY \$3,000 MILLION WOULD BE SPENT OR DIVERTED FROM THE GOVERNMENT COFFER.

IF THESE PROMISES WERE TO BE FULFILLED, THE GOVERNMENT MUST HAVE THAT MUCH MONEY WHICH IT SHOULD OBTAIN FROM THE VARIOUS TAXES, HE ADDED.

HE SAID: +BUT TO COLLECT LESS TAX AND PAY OUT MORE IS SOMETHING MAGICAL, STRANGE AND AMAZING.+

HE ADDED THERE WERE TWO WAYS THE GOVERNMENT COULD DO THIS -- THROUGH FOREIGN BORROWINGS OR PRINTING MORE MONEY.

IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD HUGE DEBTS, SOONER OR LATER IT WOULD BE AT THE BECK AND CALL OF THE CREDITORS LIKE THE FOREIGN BANKS, HE SAID.

SIMILARLY, IF THE GOVERNMENT PRINTED MORE MONEY, THE CURRENCY VALUE WOULD DROP, CAUSING INFLATION, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIA WAS FORTUNATE BECAUSE THE INFLATION RATE WAS ONLY TWO TO THREE PER CENT ANNUALLY COMPARED WITH SOME COUNTRIES WHERE AN ITEM COSTING \$1 IN JANUARY COULD COST \$200 IN DECEMBER THE SAME YEAR.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO TOUCHED ON THE GOOD UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ON THE WORKINGS OF DEMOCRACY WHICH HAD ENABLED THE COUNTRY TO BE ADMINISTERED EFFECTIVELY. -- MORE

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+THEY (THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND THE SECURITY FORCES) ARE PREPARED TO RECEIVE ORDERS FROM THE GOVERNMENT ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE ALTHOUGH THE MINISTER MAY BE LESS QUALIFIED THAN THEM,+ HE SAID.

LATER, LAUNCHING CONSTRUCTION WORK AT THE NEW KUANTAN BUS TERMINAL, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR DISMISSED CLAIMS BY SOME QUARTERS THAT THE PEACE AND PROSPERITY ENJOYED BY THE PEOPLE NOW WAS DUE SOLELY TO GOOD LUCK.

+IF GOD PROVIDES EVERYTHING BUT THE PEOPLE DO NOT PUT THE BLESSINGS TO APPROPRIATE USE, THIS COULD RESULT IN MAN-MADE DISASTERS,+ HE TOLD ABOUT 2,000 LOCAL RESIDENTS WHO ATTENDED THE CEREMONY.

HE SAID THE PEOPLE OF VARIOUS RACES AND RELIGIONS IN THE COUNTRY COULD LIVE IN PEACE BECAUSE THE COUNTRY HAD A GOVERNMENT WHICH TOOK EVERY ASPECT INTO CONSIDERATION AND NOT BECAUSE OF LUCK ALONE.

TOUCHING ON THE OPPOSITION PACT, HE SAID: +WE SHOULD GET +MARRIED+ EARLY, NOT LIKE SOME PARTIES WHICH ONLY WANT TO WED IN HASTE OR AFTER THE BRIDE IS PREGNANT, ESPECIALLY DURING THE ELECTION.+

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO REITERATED THE NEED FOR BARISAN NASIONAL TO OBTAIN A BIGGER MAJORITY SO THAT IT WOULD COMMAND THE RESPECT OF MORE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT COULD CARRY OUT ITS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS SMOOTHLY.

+AS SUCH, WE MUST ENSURE THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT GETS STRONGER SO THAT THE COUNTRY CAN CONTINUE TO ENJOY DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE,+ HE SAID.

HE LATER JOINED ABOUT 200 SOLDIERS FOR LUNCH AT THE FOURTH DIVISION HEADQUARTERS, KEM BATU 10, NEAR HERE. -- BERNAMA
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