

U E122 AAE
MAHATHIR-UNITY
EMBARGO: FOR RELEASE AT 2230 HRS TODAY

BM

KUALA LUMPUR, JAN 24⁹⁰ (BERNAMA) -- THE SPIRIT OF UNITY AMONG MALAYSIANS SHOULD BE FURTHER PERPETUATED AND CONSOLIDATED, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TONIGHT.

SPEAKING AT THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE RUKUN TETANGGA HERE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THIS WAS VITAL TO ENSURE THAT THE NATION WAS CAPABLE OF FACING CHALLENGES WITHOUT BEING UNDULY EXPOSED TO THREATS.

HE SAID THAT AS LONG AS THIS HAD NOT BEEN ACHIEVED, UNITY WOULD CONTINUE TO BE THE GOVERNMENT'S MAJOR CONSIDERATION IN THE FORMULATION OF ITS POLICIES SO THAT ITS APPROACH IN ALL ASPECTS INCLUDING POLITICS, ECONOMY, CULTURE, LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, RELIGION, SPORTS AND SECURITY WOULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THIS OBJECTIVE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT TO BUILD A UNITED NATION THE PEOPLE SHOULD SHARE A COMMON VISION.

+FOR MALAYSIA, WE HAVE AND WILL CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE TOWARDS THIS COMMON VISION BASED ON THE CONSTITUTION AND THE RUKUNEGARA,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID. -- MORE
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THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SAID THAT SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1957, MALAYSIA HAD ACHIEVED REALISTIC PROGRESS IN BUILDING A STRONG AND PROSPEROUS NATION.

NEVERTHELESS, THE PRIME MINISTER WANTED MALAYSIANS TO BE ALWAYS FORWARD-LOOKING.

HE SAID THAT NATION-BUILDING WAS A LONG PROCESS AND COULD NOT BE ATTAINED WITHIN 20 OR 30 YEARS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE NATION-BUILDING PROCESS COULD BE FURTHER INTENSIFIED IN THE 1990S AND THE FOLLOWING DECADES.

HE SAID THAT MALAYSIA COULD BE A MORE VERSATILE NATION IF THE PEOPLE HAD A STRONGER COMMITMENT, COMMON VISION AND OBJECTIVE, FIRM ADHERENCE TO THE CONSTITUTION AND THE RUKUNEGARA AND A HEALTHY PRACTICE OF GOOD VALUES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO CALLED FOR BETTER EFFORTS TO UPGRADE INTERGRATION BETWEEN SABAH AND SARAWAK AND STATES IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA.

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HE SAID THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE SABAH AND SARAWAK GOVERNMENTS, HAD TAKEN VARIOUS MEASURES TOWARDS PROMOTING INTERGRATION.

+HOWEVER, THE INTERGRATION PROCESS CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED IN A SHORT PERIOD. IT NEEDED TIME AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO STRIVE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO REMINDED THAT MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND PROBLEMS THAT COULD ARISE FROM TIME TO TIME LIKE THAT RELATING TO RELIGION SHOULD BE SOLVED THROUGH THE AVAILABLE MACHINERY AND CHANNELS AND NOT TO BE HARPED ON TO CAUSE DISHARMONY AND ADVERSELY AFFECTING PUBLIC SECURITY.

IN HIS SPEECH, THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO TOUCHED ON THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT (ISA).

HE SAID THAT THE ISA WAS NEEDED TO MONITOR AND CURB THE SPREAD OF RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES THAT COULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO PUBLIC SECURITY IF LEFT UNCHECKED.

HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO ENFORCE THE ISA AND OTHER RELATED LAWS FOR AS LONG AS RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES AND OTHER ELEMENTS COULD POSE POTENTIAL THREATS TO THE SECURITY OF THE PEOPLE AND THE NATION.

-- BERNAMA

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