

PM unhappy over bids to link leaders with BMF

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday he is not happy with the attempts to involve government leaders and other innocent parties in the Bumiputra Malaysia Finance (BMF) loans scandal.

"They try to link the BMF crime to several leaders despite the absence of proof," he told a gathering of 40,000 at the Ipoh Municipal Padang.

He said letters mentioning the names of government leaders were purposely slipped into the report (of the Committee of Inquiry).

"This was done so that the people, who will probably not read the report consisting of 16 volumes, will think that these people had been involved all along," he added.

"What actually happened was that the writers of the letters named names (indiscriminately)."

"Am I to be held responsible and guilty if someone shouts 'Mahathir'?" he asked, to which the gathering replied, "No".

He stressed that the government was not afraid to release the full report of the BMF Committee of Inquiry because "we have not done anything wrong and as for the guilty, action will be taken against them."

He said that from talk that is making the rounds now, it is clear that there are quarters trying to make it look like the people mentioned in the report are guilty.

"Such attempts should not have been made but they have succeeded in mentioning names without providing adequate explanation why the names were mentioned," he added.

This was done so that opposition parties will make use of the report for political gain without

causing for the consequences that the government and those involved have to bear, he added.

"They do not care whether BMF lost \$2 billion or \$10 billion because they are only interested in reviling the government," he said.

In his two-hour speech the Prime Minister also touched on solidarity, the economic slowdown and the success of the government in various fields which he said has created uneasiness among certain people both within and outside the country.

He said the government does in good intention whatever it does and without malice whatsoever.

On the activities of groups within the country trying to thwart the efforts of the government, he said they comprise not only politicians but also those hiding behind their organi-

sations.

On the economic slowdown, Dr Mahathir said the government will not sit back and watch the people suffer.

It has acted to cushion the effects of the slowdown by providing alternative jobs for the retrenched in commerce and road construction, he added.

He said the lowering of prices of goods is one way of helping the people, adding that if the price of oil in the world market drops further the prices of other goods will be lowered.

As for the textile manufacturing sector, which has suffered great losses, he said the government has reduced electricity rates so that they can continue to operate.

On the Penang Bridge, the Prime Minister said the project was planned long ago before the economic slowdown. It was a

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BMF innuendoes

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promise made by the Gerakan to the people which enabled it to win in Penang.

Dr Mahathir said the government will continue to work to ensure a good life for the people both in towns and villages and to make Malaysia a nation to be respected in the world.

Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ramli Ngah Talib said the people of Perak will continue to support the leadership of Dr Mahathir "come what may."

He said the Prime Minister need not doubt the Perak people's support for him. This was followed by shouts of *Hi-*

dup Mahathir! and *Berjaya!*

The Menteri Besar said there are no limits to the heavy duties of a government leader and whatever he does is for the good of the people.

Therefore, he said, the people should have full confidence in the leader in his discharge of his duties and responsibilities.

He said every effort of the government is to ensure national resilience is not threatened.

Datuk Seri Ramli said he prays Dr Mahathir will continue to be healthy so that he can steer the nation to greater progress. — *Bername*