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MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 22 (BERNAMA) -- THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL ALLOCATE \$30 MILLION TO ENABLE STATE GOVERNMENTS HELP HAWKERS AND PETTY TRADERS, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THE ASSISTANCE FOR HAWKERS AND PETTY TRADERS WAS PART OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO ERADICATE POVERTY IN THE COUNTRY, HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE 28TH BIENNIAL DELEGATES CONFERENCE OF THE FEDERATION OF HAWKERS AND PETTY TRADERS ASSOCIATIONS OF MALAYSIA HERE.

+THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AS INITIAL CAPITAL TO HAWKERS AND PETTY TRADERS FROM ALL COMMUNITIES,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT DECIDED ON THE QUANTUM, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID.

SUCH INITIAL CAPITAL WOULD ONLY BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO INTENDED TO VENTURE INTO SUCH TRADE BUT WERE FACED WITH FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, HE SAID. -- MORE
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THE GOVERNMENT HAD SIMPLIFIED THE PROCESS OF ISSUING LICENCES TO HAWKERS AND PETTY TRADERS BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID.

AS LOCAL AUTHORITIES WERE UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF STATE GOVERNMENTS, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD ADVISE THEM ABOUT THE NEW PROCESS, HE ADDED.

SAYING THAT THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED THE ROLE OF HAWKERS AND PETTY TRADERS, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IT WAS NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM TO OBSTRUCT THEM FROM CARRYING OUT THEIR ACTIVITIES.

+DURING THE PRESENT PERIOD OF ECONOMIC RECESSION, RETRENCHED WORKERS CAN TAKE UP BUSINESS ON A SMALL SCALE AND NOT JUST WAIT FOR PROJECTS THAT WILL BRING THEM BIG PROFITS,+ HE SAID.

WHILE RECOGNISING THEIR ROLE, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SEE AN IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID. -- MORE
1733MST 22 03 86

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THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD SPENT MUCH MONEY TO PROVIDE FACILITIES TO HAWKERS AND PETTY TRADERS, SUCH AS THE PROVISION OF BETTER STALLS.

+HAWKERS AND PETTY TRADERS FROM THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES MUST COOPERATE AND ENSURE THE CLEANLINESS OF THEIR PREMISES PARTICULARLY WITH THE APPROACH OF THE PATA CONFERENCE,+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD ADVISE STATE GOVERNMENTS TO SET UP COMMITTEES TO LOOK AFTER THE INTERESTS OF HAWKERS AND PETTY TRADERS AT LOCAL AUTHORITY LEVEL.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THE ACTIVITIES OF HAWKERS AND PETTY TRADERS AS PART OF THE LIFESTYLE OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY.

THOUGH BIG SHOPS, RESTAURANTS AND SHOPPING COMPLEXES WERE BEING BUILT HERE AND THERE, PEOPLE CONTINUED TO FLOCK TO THE STALLS WHERE THINGS WERE RELATIVELY CHEAP, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID. -- MORE
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+THE GOVERNMENT ALSO FEELS UNEASY OVER THE ACTION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WHO ARE APPARENTLY GRABBING THE OPPORTUNITIES MEANT FOR THIS COUNTRY'S CITIZENS IN THE FIELD OF PETTY TRADE,+ HE SAID.

PRESENT WERE THE FEDERATION'S CHAIRMAN DATUK TAN KIM HOR, CHAIRMAN SOO KIM WAT AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT DATUK DR TAN TIONG HONG. -- BERNAMA
1743MST 22 03 86