

MAHATHIR-HOUSE

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KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 13 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY DIRECTED STATE GOVERNMENTS TO SPEED UP THE CONSTRUCTION OF LOW-COST HOUSES UNDER THE SPECIAL HOUSING PROGRAMME. UNDER THE PROGRAMME, 80,000 UNITS ARE TO BE CONSTRUCTED EVERY YEAR OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID STATE GOVERNMENTS MUST URGENTLY LOOK FOR DEVELOPERS TO IMPLEMENT THE HOUSING PROJECTS EITHER ON A PRIVATISED BASIS OR THROUGH JOINT VENTURES TO MEET THE TARGET FOR THIS YEAR.

LAUNCHING THE SPECIAL LOW-COST HOUSING PROGRAMME IN DUSUN NANDING, HULU LANGAT, NEAR HERE, HE SAID THE PROJECT SHOULD IN FACT HAVE BEEN STARTED LAST MONTH.

PREPARATIONS SHOULD BEGIN NOW TO IMPLEMENT THE TARGET FOR 1987/88, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE PROGRAMME WAS TO HELP BOOST THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC GROWTH. -- MORE
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THE PROGRAMME WAS ALSO AIMED AT PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO THE PEOPLE AND PROVIDING THE LOW-INCOME GROUP WITH ACCOMMODATION.

HE SAID TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAMME A NUMBER OF STRATEGIES HAD BEEN UNDERTAKEN, ONE OF WHICH REQUIRED STATE GOVERNMENTS TO PREPARE A LIST OF PEOPLE QUALIFIED TO BUY SUCH HOUSES.

THIS WOULD SAVE THE DEVELOPER'S HOLDING COSTS AND AVOID THE PROBLEM OF COMPLETED HOUSES REMAINING UNOCCUPIED, HE SAID.

HE SAID THE STATE GOVERNMENTS HAD SET UP SPECIAL TASK FORCES TO FACILITATE APPROVAL OF LAND, PROJECT PLANNING AND THE PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN ACTION TO EXEMPT STAMP DUTY FOR THE TRANSFER OF THE HOUSE FROM THE DEVELOPER TO THE FIRST BUYER.

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THE PRIME MINISTER SAID SURVEY COSTS HAD ALSO BEEN EXEMPTED FOR THE LOW-COST HOUSING PROGRAMME IF SUCH WORK WAS UNDERTAKEN BY THE SURVEY DEPARTMENT.

THE GOVERNMENT HAD INTRODUCED NEW LOAN ARRANGEMENTS UNDER WHICH HOUSING LOANS COULD BE OBTAINED EASILY AND SPEEDILY, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE ASSOCIATION OF BANKS HAD AGREED TO THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS.

COSTS OF FINANCING SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED IN A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AMONG THE BANKS, CONTRACTORS, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DEVELOPERS, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO STRESSED THE NEED FOR THE SETTING UP OF A +ONE-STOP CENTRE+ WHERE ALL THE RELEVANT PARTIES -- BANKS, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DEVELOPER OR BUYER -- COULD MEET AND SETTLE ALL MATTERS PERTAINING TO APPROVAL AND SALE OF HOUSES.

HE ALSO URGED THE ARCHITECT ASSOCIATION, MASTER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION, CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATIONS AND TOWN PLANNERS TO PLAY THEIR ROLE EFFECTIVELY TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE HOUSING PROGRAMME. -- MORE
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TO FURTHER REDUCE THE COST OF LOW-COST HOUSES, THE PRIME MINISTER URGED ARCHITECTS ASSOCIATIONS, CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATIONS, COUNTRY PLANNING ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHER QUARTERS TO INTRODUCE NEW IDEAS AND TECHNOLOGY INTO THE HOUSING INDUSTRY.

ONE OF THE METHODS OF REDUCING THE PRICES OF LOW-COST HOUSES TO AROUND \$12,000 TO \$15,000 WAS TO PUT UP CORE HOUSES WHICH COULD BE EXTENDED LATER WHEN THE OWNERS HAD MONEY.

APART FROM THE SPECIAL HOUSING PROGRAMME, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO CONTINUE WITH ITS PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME UNDER THE FIFTH MALAYSIA PLAN, HE SAID. -- BERNAMA

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