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MAHATHIR - STUDIES

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JITRA, NOV 27 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT WILL TRY TO OVERCOME THE FREQUENT FLOODS WHICH HIT THE LOW-LYING AREAS IN THE COUNTRY, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

"IF WE CAN AFFORD, WE WILL BUILD OR DO SOMETHING TO MITIGATE THE POSSIBILITY OF FLOODS OCCURRING IN THOSE AREAS," HE TOLD REPORTERS HERE AFTER VISITING THE FLOOD-HIT AREAS IN THE KUBANG PASU DISTRICT. HE SAID ALTHOUGH STEPS TO PREVENT FLOODS COULD BE TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT, THERE WAS NO GUARANTEE THAT SUCH MEASURES WERE EFFECTIVE.

THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT INDICATE THE SPECIFIC AREAS OR STEPS HE HAD IN MIND TO MITIGATE FLOODS.

HE SAID THE BIG FLOODS WHICH LASHED VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY THE PAST WEEK HOWEVER PROVIDED LESSONS AND INFORMATION IN THAT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND THE PEOPLE, FOR EXAMPLE, NOW COULD IDENTIFY THE FLOOD-PRONE AREAS.--HOSE

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ADDED THAT OTHER INFORMATION GAINED FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CURRENT BIG FLOODS INCLUDED THAT OF CHANGLON (IN KUBANG PASU DISTRICT) AND ALOR SETAR BEING HIT BY FLOODS WITHIN 24 OR 48 HOURS AFTER FLOODS SWEEP SOUTHERN THAILAND.

"SUCH INFORMATION IS PROBABLY USEFUL IN TERMS OF MAKING SPEEDY ARRANGEMENTS IN THE EVENT OF FUTURE BIG FLOODS," HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR DESCRIBED BIG FLOODS AS A NORMAL CALAMITY WHICH OCCURRED ON A 40 TO 50-YEAR CYCLE.

WHILE SPEAKING AT THE KUBANG PASU FLOOD OPERATIONS ROOM EARLIER, THE PRIME MINISTER RECALLED HIS OWN EXPERIENCE IN FACING BIG FLOODS WHEN HE LIVED IN CHANGLON IN 1962.

HE PRAISED AND THANKED THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES AS WELL AS VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS FOR THE EFFICIENT AND PROPER MANNER IN WHICH THEY WENT ABOUT THEIR TASK OF PROVIDING RELIEF TO VICTIMS OF THE CURRENT FLOODS.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S NICE, DATUK SERI DATIN FARUKA DR SITI HANJAH MOHAMAD ALL LATER PRESENTED A 40,000 CHEQUE TO MENTERI BESAR DATUK SERI HAJI USMAN ASOFF, AS CONTRIBUTION TO FLOOD VICTIMS IN KEDAH FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF WIVES OF MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS (BARTI).

SHE ALSO PRESENTED ANOTHER 43,000 CHEQUE TO THE STATE WELFARE SERVICES DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR DRS ABU BAKAR ALIAR, AS BARTI'S ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION TO POOR STUDENTS IN THE STATE.--BERNAMA

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