

Dr M: Urban folk not neglected

By K. Bala

PENANG, Sun. — The Government has managed to strike a careful balance in ensuring that development of rural areas is not at the expense of urban areas, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Although emphasis had been given to caring for the needs of the rural folk, the Government continued to see to it that urban dwellers' needs were provided too.

What the Government had done was to provide amenities like water, electricity, clinics and schools to the rural people just like those enjoyed by urban folk, Dr Mahathir said.

He said this when opening the pedestrian mall leading to Komtar which

he described as the landmark of the immense development in Penang under the Barisan Nasional Government led by Chief Minister Dr Lim Chong Eu.

Despite the development in the urban areas, some of its residents had denied the Barisan Nasional the support it deserved.

Dr Mahathir said in a democracy like Malaysia's and under the Barisan Nasional concept where all races were represented, the opposition could not do anything concrete except to criticise for the sake of criticising.

"While Barisan leaders are constantly thinking of ways to help the people, all the opposition can do is throw books," he said amidst laughter from the large gathering.

The Prime Minister was

apparently referring to the incident at the Penang State Assembly sitting on June 11 when DAP vice-chairman Karpal Singh threw the standing orders at Speaker Datuk Ooi Ean Kwong. The opposition MP and State Assemblyman was ordered out of the Assembly and has been suspended from attending the legislative proceedings indefinitely.

Efforts

"When they get freedom of speech, this is what opposition members do. We in the Barisan on the other hand are always striving for ways to further promote development in Penang," he said.

The Prime Minister said the BN not only ensured growth in the urban and rural areas but its policies

were tailored to care for the rich as well as the poor.

For instance, he said in Komtar, both big and small traders have a place.

If not for Government efforts, small businessmen could not afford to have the opportunity to trade in big commercial complexes.

The Prime Minister, who arrived this afternoon for an overnight visit, also chided opposition leaders for their vote-catching gimmicks.

He said a certain leader (in an apparent reference to Semangat 46 leader Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah) had once said if Malays formed the majority in the Penang Assembly, then the Chief Ministership would be given to a Malay.

But when this evoked opposition from his Chinese political friends, he withdrew the remarks.

Similarly the leader, he said, had recently said that a Chinese would be made a deputy if he became Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir said now the person was changing the tune saying this would not happen out of fear for his friends from the east coast (referring to Pas).

He said the Federal Government had spent a lot of money to develop the State and would continue to do so.

He said the Government would take all measures to ensure that Penang, which has been described as the "Pearl of the Orient", lived up to its name.

Among the projects in store are beautification ventures to make it a garden city to enable the State to continue to attract visitors.

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