

MAHATHIR-GROUP

BM

JITRA, JAN 20⁹⁰ (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY WARNED THE PEOPLE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF A CERTAIN GROUP VISITING VARIOUS VILLAGES TRYING TO GARNER SUPPORT.

+THIS GROUP CAST VARIOUS ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT IN VIEW OF THE COMING GENERAL ELECTION TO GAIN THE PEOPLE'S VOTES,+ HE TOLD ABOUT 1,000 VILLAGERS OF KAMPUNG BINJAL NEAR HERE.

WHILE ADVISING THE PEOPLE NOT TO FALL PREY TO SUCH TACTIC, HE SAID THE GROUP EVEN ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF PLANNING VARIOUS WASTEFUL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

HE SAID THAT WHILE IN POWER, MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP WERE NOT SERIOUS IN DISCHARGING THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AND HAD NEVER VISITED THEIR CONSTITUENTS IN THE VILLAGES.

THEY ALSO HAD LUXURIOUS LIFE-STYLE WHILE IN POWER AND EVEN CONSTRUCTED A POOL ON THE 32ND FLOOR OF THE BANK BUMIPUTRA MALAYSIA BERHAD (BBMB) BUILDING IN KUALA LUMPUR, HE SAID. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-GROUP 2 JITRA

+I CAN PROVE ALL THIS AND YET TODAY THEY ARE SAYING THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS WASTING MONEY ON THE PROTON SAGA AND PENANG BRIDGE PROJECTS WHEN THESE PROJECTS ARE TRULY FOR THE PEOPLE'S BENEFIT,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT WAS TRUE THAT IN THE PAST KUBANG PASU DISTRICT DID NOT BENEFIT FROM DEVELOPMENT BUT THE TIME HAD COME NOW FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO BRING DEVELOPMENT TO THEM.

ON THE PENANG BRIDGE, HE SAID IT WOULD COST \$24,000 MILLION TO BUILD A SIMILAR BRIDGE IN JAPAN AND IN THIS RESPECT THE \$700 MILLION SPENT ON THE BRIDGE COULD BE CONSIDERED CHEAP.

THE PRIME MINISTER WANTED THE PEOPLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS BEING IMPLEMENTED BY WORKING HARD TO RAISE THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING BY VENTURING INTO WHATEVER BUSINESS UNDERTAKINGS.

FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, LOCAL RESIDENTS COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PROJECT TO CONSTRUCT THE UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA (UUM) CAMPUS IN SINTOK NEAR HERE BY BECOMING PART OF THE WORKFORCE OR SETTING UP FOOD STALLS. -- MORE

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MAHATHIR-GROUP 3 JITRA

HE REFUTED ALLEGATIONS THAT LOCAL WORKERS WERE PAID LESS COMPARED TO FOREIGN WORKERS AT THE UUM PROJECT.

IN FACT, HE SAID INDONESIAN WORKERS WERE PAID LESS THAN LOCAL WORKERS BUT THEY WERE WILLING TO WORK FOR \$250 A MONTH AND THROUGH DILIGENCE THEIR WAGES INCREASED TO ABOUT \$1,000 A MONTH.

HE SAID WHEN THE UUM PROJECT WAS COMPLETED ABOUT 12,000 PEOPLE, INCLUDING STUDENTS AND STAFF, ARE EXPECTED TO MOVE IN AND WILL PROVIDE GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL RESIDENT TO START BUSINESS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO EXPRESSED REGRET OVER THE ACTION OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS WHO BOUGHT LAND IN LANGKAWI AT CHEAPER PRICE AND SOLD THEM BACK TO THE ISLANDERS AT HIGHER PRICE WHEN THEY FOUND OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO DEVELOP THE ISLAND.

HE WAS ALSO NOT HAPPY WITH THE ATTITUDE OF GRADUATES WHO REMAINED UNEMPLOYED IN SPITE OF MANY OPPORTUNITIES BEING PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

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MAHATHIR-GROUP 4 JITRA

CITING AN EXAMPLE, HE SAID, RECENTLY THE GOVERNMENT OFFERED EMPLOYMENT IN ENGLAND FOR GRADUATES WITH INCOME BETWEEN \$1,500 AND \$2,000 A MONTH.

AFTER THE OFFER WAS ADVERTISED, HE SAID MANY APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED AND THE GOVERNMENT HOPED TO SEND 20 CANDIDATES FOR A START.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, ON THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW ONLY 10 PEOPLE TURNED UP AND OF THESE FIVE TURNED UP SHABBILY DRESSED AND WERE REJECTED. -- BERNAMA

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