

CNS8303

U GE 22-03 00210 EG501

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Mahathir

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(P)

ALOR SETAR, March 22nd (Bernama) — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed regret over the negative statements made about him by certain people, such as saying that he was ill and needed to undergo surgery.

+I do not understand why there are people making such negative statements, + he told reporters on arrival at the Sultan Abdul Halim airport in Kepala Batas near here to attend a breaking-of-the-fast ceremony with the people in Kampung Teluk Malik near Jitra this evening.

+When I went to England for another purpose, there were certain people who claimed that I went for surgery. I go here and there and everybody sees me but there are people who say that I am ill, have to undergo surgery. I do not know their motive, + he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said these people probably spread the rumours with the hope of bringing down prices on the stock market and to hamper development in the country.

+If I am not around, it does not mean that the country will have to stop developing ... there are many other people who can continue to develop the nation, + he said. -- more

♥22/03/20-09MST

CNS8309

U GE 22-03 00135 EG502

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Mahathir 2 Alor Setar

On the water crisis in Melaka, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said everyone had to share the responsibility.

He was responding to reporters' questions on several engineers who disagreed with the report of the committee which looked into the water crisis in the state.

On the Federal Government proposal to take over management of water in the country, he said there was a need to provide for more water as the population grew.

The government had targetted for the population to reach 70 million by the year 2100 but projections showed that the figure would be reached by 2040.

He said the demand for more water would cause various problems, and therefore there must be good management. -- more

♥22/03/20-43MST

CNS8310

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Mahathir 3 Alor Setar

He also said the government felt that development of water supply must meet the needs of all states and not one state only.

On reports that 40 kampung children in Padang Terap district were unable to continue their studies owing to poverty, the prime minister said society should help such people.

He said the public should not accuse the government of neglecting such people. -- Bernama

♥22/03/20-44MST