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PASTR MAS, May 30 (Bernama) -- The people stand to gain more from a development project if they treat development issues separately from the political ones, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today. He said when the federal government gave assistance, it was done in all sincerity and without malice.

The people's interests were always uppermost in the federal government's mind when it extended assistance, he said when opening the Pasir Mas-Salor bridge here.

"We give aid to the people in Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis as the government is duty-bound to do so," he said.

"It was for this reason that the Federal Government had set aside substantial allocations to help the people including those in Kelantan," he said. -- more

♥30/05/15-21MST

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While expressing concern over politicising of development issues, the Prime Minister said since the people had given it a mandate to run the country, it was the government's responsibility to improve the lot of the people.

He said the government collected taxes and zakat from the rich for distribution among the poor. For that matter, the Pasir Mas-Salor bridge itself was built with money from the rich including those in Kelantan.

On the national objective of making Malaysia a developed nation by 2020, the Prime Minister said the government wanted to bring the country to parity with Japan, the United States and other industrialised countries in Europe.

Towards this end, the government had to have proper planning while the people must show determination to make the vision a reality, he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said it was not impossible for Malaysia to manufacture aeroplanes provided that the government and the people worked together towards that goal.

Menleri Besar Haji Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, Youth and Sports Minister Senator Haji Annuar Musa and former Menleri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Yaacob were among those present. -- Bernama

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