

12 DEC 1977

# PM directs Sanusi to resolve rice millers' woes

ALOR STAR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has directed Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid to meet today with the Associated Rice Millers Association of Peninsular Malaysia (Arma) to resolve the problems faced by Chinese millers.

"We have resolved bigger problems than this. I've wanted to meet them for long but I've been busy.

"There's no problem Datuk Seri Sanusi will meet them (the millers)," he said after a brief discussion with rice mill officials on arrival at the Sultan Abdul Halim airport.

Also present were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff and State MCA chief Senator Datuk William Chek Lin Kwai.

The millers were represented by Arma president Saw Kok Oon and officials of the Kedah-Perlis Rice Millers Association.

Dr Mahathir said there was no question of the millers using the issue to "blackmail" the Barisan in view of the Dec 19 Jerlun state by-election, adding that PAS was trying to capitalise on it.

"This is not a political issue. If PAS thinks so, we want to see how it can solve it," he added.

Datuk Chek said MCA

president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik had informed him that he had raised the issue at yesterday's Cabinet meeting.

He said Dr Mahathir had informed the millers (during their meeting) that it was not the Government's policy to "deprive one race for the benefit of another."

"We are glad with Dr Mahathir's kind assurance and rice millers are campaigning for a Barisan victory," he said.

Mr Saw said Dr Mahathir had pledged to look into the problem personally if a solution was not found.

Dr Mahathir also said PAS might face action for commemorating the Me-mali incident without a police permit

"They believe that he ing a political party, they can escape action. But for us, all are equal before the law," he added.

Dr Mahathir said four policemen were slain in the Nov 27, 1985 incident hut PAS was "overlooking this."

He said it was puzzling how PAS could term the death of its followers as syuhada (those who bad died in a holy war) when the sacrifice of the policemen who were out to safeguard the peace were not acknowledged.