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Bigger tithes collection despite problems

KEPALA BATAS, Thurs. - The State Islamic Religious Council has to date collected about RM5 million in tithes, about RM1 million more than last year.

Describing the collection as very encouraging, council chairman Datuk Mohd Shariff Omar said today this showed the people were not badly affected by the economic problems.

"It is now only October but the business and individual tithes collection among Muslims is increasing despite a setback in our economic growth since last year," he told reporters after visiting several vegetable farms on Penang Regional Development Authority (Perda) land.

In the same way, Mohd Shariff, who is also Perda chairman and Deputy Chief Minister, said donations were also coming in for the TYT Natural Disaster Relief Fund.

He said this fund was being replenished despite several disbursements made to victims of natural disasters, including floods, since early this year.

"The people, regardless of their religious beliefs, are still contributing to the fund," he said.

He said the people were able to do so because the country was being economically and politically well-managed.

"Despite the attacks on our economy, the Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, has managed to keep the nation from facing serious economic problems as experienced by other countries which were badly affected by the global economic crisis.

"To ensure continuous prosperity and harmony in the country, we must support efforts of Dr Mahathir," he said.

One of the farms visited by Mohd Shariff was a 28-ha vegetable plot being farmed jointly by the Ara Kuda and Kampung Tun Sardon farmers' groups.

They are growing sweet potatoes, bananas, chillies and maize on a crop rotation basis.

On an adjacent plot, the State Area Farmer's Organisation and the Tabung Haji are jointly growing pineapples on a 12ha area owned by the authority.

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