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Mahathir-Corporate

DR MAHATHIR DENIES HELPING CORPORATE FIGURES MORE

JITRA, May 1 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today dismissed allegations that the government helped corporate figures more than the poor.

The prime minister said the government helped the corporate figures not because they were rich but because many poor people depended on small business opportunities and jobs from this group.

"It is totally untrue that the government helped the corporate figures and not the poor," he said when winding up the debate at the Kubang Pasu Umno division delegates meeting, here.

Dr Mahathir who also heads the division, said the corporate figures would pay taxes and zakat (tithes), make donations and even build mosques.

"The government collects 28 sen on every RM1 the rich make. So, the government takes from the rich and distribute to the poor," he said.

At the same time, the government helped the poor like providing scholarships, schools and clinics, he said.

"The government spends millions of ringgit on rural development and builds and repairs houses for the hardcore poor," he said.

He added that the government helped those who were already rich so that they would not go bankrupt as this could affect the national economy.

"Are we prepared to see the Malays go bankrupt...(to see) the Malays not be millionaires but only workers and a second class community in their own country?

"Why be jealous when others are rich? The rich pay a lot of taxes," he said.

He urged the people not to be taken in by the propaganda of PAS which he said wanted the Malays to hate Malays who "go up".

"I'm not jealous. My pay is not even a quarter that of Petronas officers. The salary of Petronas officers is higher than the prime minister's," he said.

In fact, he was proud when Malays owned big businesses like airlines and telephone companies, he said.

"When they are rich they do not forget to do charity. The jobs of thousands of people depend on them. They pay a lot of taxes, zakat and some have built an islamic museum costing RM70 million," he said.

On the fall in rubber prices, Dr Mahathir said the government would give attention to the matter.

He also called on Umno members at the branch and divisional levels to continue to explain current issues to the poeple.

"Dont' think that because Umno is a government party we don't need to explain any more. Don't forget that they can vote," he said.

Dr Mahathir later presented donations amounting to RM3,001.80 from the delegates to a TV3 representative for the Kosovo Fund.

-- BERNAMA

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