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Mahathir-Harakah

DR MAHATHIR CRITICISES HARAKAH FOR TWISTING STORIES

JITRA, July 20 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today criticised PAS' official organ, Harakah, for twisting tales on people facing hard times to give the impression that he is an irresponsible leader.

The prime minister said Harakah's action clearly showed that it was lying to the people just to get them to hate him.

"They try to give the message that I, as a leader, live in a beautiful palace while there are people in my parliamentary constituency who live in abject poverty," he told reporters during a visit to Kampung Jeragan, near here.

He said this after a villager, Kasim Osman, 68, who was depicted in a Harakah report several weeks ago as living in a dilapidated hut, met him to explain his true situation.

Kasim told the prime minister that the dilapidated hut in Kampung Lamterom, Mukim Temin, portrayed in the report was only a hut for fruit pickers while he lived in a proper house with all the basic amenities in Kampung Jeragan.

Kasim, a rubber tapper and an Umno member, said he was an old man and did not understand their real motive when two reporters from Harakah met him and told him that they wanted to do a story on him for the newspaper.

"I did not expect them to write a story saying that we live a hard life so I gave them an interview," said Kasim, who has lived alone since his wife died while his four children live elsewhere.

Harakah had published a picture of the hut measuring 4m by 2.3m and 2.6m high in the report saying that there was only 0.2m space above Kasim's head when he prayed.

Asked about Harakah's way of reporting, Dr Mahathir said the biweekly tabloid had bad intention.

"They distort stories for political interest," said the prime minister who also opened a new surau in the village.

-- BERNAMA

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