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Mahathir-Sabah

FEDERAL GOVT WILL NOT OPPRESS SABAH, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

SANDAKAN, Feb 18 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the federal government has no intention to oppress Sabah but instead wished to allocate adequate funds for the development of the state and the people.

The prime minister said allocations amounting to billions of ringgit had been spent for Sabah.

"Our intention is to allocate sufficient funds for the development of Sabah," he said when speaking at the Chinese New Year celebrations organised by the Sandakan Barisan Nasional (BN), here.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived here this morning for a three-day visit to Sabah, said he could still remember that Kota Kinabalu town did not even have street lights when the BN took over the state government from the opposition Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) in 1994.

"The insufficient power supply is due to lack of funds to invest to generate electricity, rendering the people to live in darkness," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was the BN's policy to unite all races and ensure they were given equal opportunities to seek wealth.

He said the New Economic Policy (NEP) implemented after the 1969 racial riots not only managed to unite all the races but also helped them.

Having done that, there is no jealousy among the different races, he said.

"We bring closer racial ties through political actions, we are not greedy, we don't want one race to get all the wealth," he said.

Dr Mahathir said main ethnic groups in Sabah were also given an opportunity to head the BN state government because the state's population comprised various races.

"We are not greedy.... we are prepared to share power, to share authority together," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok and his predecessor Datuk Yong Teck Lee and former Chief Minister Datuk Salleh Said Keruak protected the interests and treated all races in the state equally.

"The BN's policy is merely to see the country progress, that's our only intention."

"By becoming the prime minister or chief minister, we don't want to show off, it is solely to serve the people," he said.

Dr Mahathir also called on the people to be grateful as they could live in peace and harmony despite living in a plural society.

The people would continue to enjoy the prevailing peace and harmony if the BN government ruled the state, he added.

-- BERNAMA

AFY TS