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Mahathir-Poverty

GOV'T AND THE WEALTHY CAN HELP OVERCOME POVERTY

KUALA LUMPUR, July 16 (bernama) -- Poverty should not exist in Malaysia as the country is rich in natural resources besides the assistance provided by the government, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

The Prime Minister said that the land is so fertile that a simple effort would bear results.

"As such, there is no reason why poverty should exist in this country," he said at the "Puteri Saadong -- Unfinished Struggle" play here tonight.

If there were any incidence of poverty it was because they were destitutes and could not work, he said.

"We should assist this unfortunate group by directly giving them donations although it would be better to create opportunities for them to earn a living," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who was accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, said Malaysians should count their blessing as there is no necessity to auction off anything to raise funds.

He said Malaysians are fortunate because of the generous nature of the wealthy group who do not forget to extend help to the needy.

Dr Mahathir also said needy students would be provided with scholarships as the government had adequate funds.

However, he stressed that what was more important was for the students to concentrate on their studies.

He said it would be of no use if the scholarship holders were to get involved in demonstrations instead.

"...we are in competition with others to improve our knowledge and efficiency...we don't have time to waste," he said.

At the function, donations totalling more than RM1 million were handed over to the Prime Minister for the Yayasan Kemiskinan Kelantan.

Kemas Kelantan also contributed RM10,000 to the Kosovo Action Front Fund.

-- BERNAMA

NHD AO