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Mahathir-Support

GOVT APPRECIATES PEOPLE'S SUPPORT, SAYS MAHATHIR

MIRI, Aug 5 (Bernama) -- The government is determined to ensure continued prosperity for Malaysians despite the lingering effects of the 1997 economic crisis, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

This is in appreciation of the people's support for the government all this while, he said.

Driven by the single-minded desire not to see the financial crisis bring hardships to the people, the government urgently then set up the National Economic Action Council (NEAC), he said.

"NEAC members meet daily to monitor the economic situation especially that directly affects the people. The government acts immediately to avert potentially adverse effects," he said inaugurating the Permyjaya new township near here today.

About 10,000 attended the function held at the Dato' Permaisuri Hall.

Sprawled over 120 ha in Tudan, about 10 km from here, Permyjaya presently has 2,950 low- and medium-cost units as well as detached and semi-detached ones.

Dr Mahathir listed the various actions the governing Barisan Nasional (BN) promptly took to deal with the crisis, including:

- \* fixing the value of the ringgit against the US dollar so as to insulate the currency against rogue traders;
- \* launching a national house-ownership campaign which successfully rejuvenated the housing and related industries;
- \* reducing tax to bring down price of consumer items to help accelerate the retailing business; and
- \* providing special payment of RM600 for civil servants, also as part of efforts towards activating further the retail sector.

Dr Mahathir stressed that the government wanted to see that as many homes as possible get built especially for the low-income earners.

"Although the economic downturn slows down housing projects, the government is determined to see that the industry flourishes so that related sectors such cement, steel and brick manufacturing do not suffer too," he said.

The prime minister then reminded the people against being influenced by parties dreaming to be the government but have nothing to deliver to or planned for the people.

He cited as an example the people of Sabah who once chose to be under opposition rule which only left the state in backwardness.

When Dr Mahathir thanked the people of Miri for having supported the BN all along, the 10,000-strong crowd responded with three loud cheers of "Hidup Mahathir" (long live Mahathir).

The prime minister then replied in jest : "Thank You. Let's all live long together."

A thunderous applause followed when the prime minister said "Hidup rakyat Sarawak" (long live the people of Sarawak) and "Hidup Rakyat Miri" (long live Miri residents).

Dr Mahathir also commended Malaysian housing developers for carrying out their social obligations by providing the people with facilities.

Citing the Permyjaya township as a case in point, he said: "In some other countries, they may just build a row of houses. But in Malaysia, they build an entire town".

Besides the 2,950 units already built, the developer of Permyjaya

planned to complete about 3,000 units more by the end of next year.

It planned to erect 17,000 units up to year 2020 and the township is projected to have a population of 60,000 by then.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir opened the 150m-long Tudan Bridge over the Miri River to link the new township with Miri town.

Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, state Barisan Nasional leaders, federal and state government officers as well as key Sarawak corporate figures were also present.

-- BERNAMA

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