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PM: Difficult to help Kelantan as its people are told to be ungrateful

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said it was quite difficult to eradicate poverty in Kelantan because the Pas-led State Government was asking people to be ungrateful to the Federal Government.

The tangible poverty problem in Kelantan occurred because the State Government did not give attention to it, Dr Mahathir said, adding that the Kelantan Government had also failed to take any action.

"It's true they don't have money, but they should not have made promises to the people if they cannot afford," he said when asked to comment on a special report on poverty in Kelantan in a local daily yesterday.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a Press conference in Cyberjaya near here after launching MSC Venture Corporation Sdn Bhd, the first venture-capital company to invest in the Multimedia Super Corridor, and MSC Venture One Sdn Bhd, the first local venture capital fund.

He said: "We (Federal Government) can help, but the problem is when we help, the opposition party is fond of saying that it's all right even if you don't support the Barisan Nasional.

"Even now, they are urging the people not to be thankful to those who help them. Therefore, we are a bit reluctant to help," he said.

On the resignation of Datuk Harris Salleh from Parti Bersekutu and his intention to stay away from politics, Dr Mahathir said: "That is very good. I think he should concentrate on his plantations as he is very good in agriculture and forestry."

Dr Mahathir said the BN had always found him to be quite an erratic person.

"For that reason, BN could not co-operate with him because we don't know what he is going to do next," he said.

On the request by Cuepacs that housing loan interest for civil servants be reduced to three per cent from four per cent, he said the Government would consider the request if it could afford to reduce the rate.

"Of course, we are willing to help but our financial allocation becomes a problem," Dr Mahathir said.

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