

Dr M: All questions will be answered

Nst 20 MAR 2001

KUALA LUMPUR Mon — All questions posed in Parliament pertaining to the recent incident in Jalan Klang Lama will be answered Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today

He said there was no need to file a motion on the matter as it could be discussed during question and answer sessions

Speaking to reporters after a pre council meeting with Barisan Nasional Members of Parliament and Senators at Parliament House Dr Mahathir said there was still harmony among the people following the incident

He was earlier asked about Pas plans to file a motion to discuss the matter. Yes we can discuss. What need is there for a motion when we can discuss it during the question and answer sessions?

That motion is for political mileage but we need to clarify to the public what exactly happened in Jalan Klang Lama, he said.

Asked if any single agency would be formed to tackle urban poverty, he said the Government focused on urban and rural poverty.

Both are equally problematic. So we have to settle this and we are attending to it, Dr Mahathir said.

On whether the National Social Policy was one of the ways to deal with the matter, he said in Malaysia attention had always been paid to the poor.

Dr Mahathir said urban squatters broke the law when they occupied land that was not theirs and that when electricity and water was supplied to them it was seen as justifying their occupation.

But in rural poverty they are not squatters on other people's land and so it is easy for us to build houses for them.

In the case of urban poverty we find their income is rather high if we take into account their owning cars and refrigerators.

Dr Mahathir said there were however those who were really poor who did not have jobs or houses.

He said there were also those who even when given government built houses were not interested in moving in as they would have to pay rent while as squatters they did not have to.

There are also cases where although they have houses elsewhere they rent out their homes and live as squatters.

So we have to separate those who are really poor who have to be helped by the Government and those who choose to stay as squatters.