

Rural people to be taught skills

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We'll set up training centres, says PM

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TENOM Sat — Rural people who migrate to the urban areas would be equipped with the necessary skills to enable them to secure jobs with good income to prevent them from ending up as squatters

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government would set up training centres throughout the country for the rural people to acquire skills and knowledge in relevant fields

We need to ensure that when they (rural people) migrate to the urban areas they would have the required skills to secure jobs with good income in order for them to have a decent living he said

Speaking at the ground breaking ceremony for the construction of the Tenom Beaufort trunk road here Dr Mahathir said currently three fifths of the urban population were from the rural areas but this figure was expected to increase dramatically in the future

Many rural people who migrated

to urban areas ended up as squatters because of their dismal earnings he said

The Prime Minister said the Government wanted the rural people who moved to the urban areas to play a role in nation building

He said this in the wake of the clashes between squatters at Kampong Medan Jalan Klang Lama which have been linked to poverty

Dr Mahathir called on the people to put aside racial sentiments to ensure continued peace and prosperity

We want the multiracial and multireligious society in Malaysia to live in harmony so that the Government would be able to focus on efforts to improve their livelihood he said

Efforts to improve the economy would be hindered if there were riots and chaos in the country

Dr Mahathir said the Government would accelerate the implementation of rural development projects as part of concerted efforts to eradicate poverty

He said basic infrastructure such as electricity water and roads would be provided to the rural pop

ulation to enable them to enjoy the same benefits as those in the urban areas

In connection with this he said the Government had decided to revive the Bakun hydro electric project in Belaga Sarawak to supply electricity to Sarawak and Sabah specifically

The Prime Minister said the project which will produce up to 2 400 megawatts of electricity would bring down the cost of usage and boost industrial development in the two States

The 55km Tenom Beaufort trunk road will be built at a cost of RM300 million and is expected to be ready within the next three years

More than 20 000 people braved the sweltering heat for more than three hours to welcome the Prime Minister and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali

The arrival of Dr Mahathir who was crowned with a Murut head gear was heralded with a traditional Murut hero's welcome called *angkuku*

Also present at the function were Chief Minister Datuk Osu Sukam and State Cabinet Ministers