

Aid not reaching hardcore poor

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PM blames certain quarters for practising favouritism

By R. Manirajan

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon: Government aid is not reaching the hardcore poor because of favouritism practised by certain quarters entrusted to get feedback.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government wanted to help the people under the Hardcore Poverty Eradication Project based on feedback from certain quarters on who should really get the help.

"However, these persons (certain quarters) sometimes might exercise favouritism on who should get the assistance and who should not," he told a press conference after opening the International Water Association Conference and Exhibition on Water and Wastewater Management for Developing Countries.

"At the end of the day, the government gets the scolding when deserving people are denied the

assistance."

Apart from the minister concerned going down to the ground to identify who should get the help, the relevant officers or MPs as well as politicians might also have to do the same thing, Mahathir said.

The auditor-general's report, released recently, revealed the failure of the projects to help hardcore poor as the aid was given to people above the poverty level.

On the Malay and government reserve land invaded illegally by foreigners with the help of local district officials, Mahathir said nobody can say unless there are a lot of officers doing nothing but just monitoring other officers doing work.

If an illegal building was being constructed, the officer concerned will be able to identify the other officer responsible for giving the permission.

"It is not always corruption even though people say it is, but sometimes this kind of thing just grows like that," he said.

Therefore, he said, there is a need to review the management system which may be the cause.

Asked if there was a need to review the National Land Code, he said that when the government allocates money for projects, these funds are not used as the procedures involved take a long time.

Citing an example, he said land acquisition may take as long as one year even though there were funds amounting to RM100 million already allocated.

"The system and unforeseen problems are the cause ... people do not give their land freely but instead dispute the valuation," he said.