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Mahathir-Blind

DESPITE HEAVY SCHEDULE, PRIME MINISTER FINDS TIME FOR THE BLIND

By: David Chelliah

KUALA LUMPUR, May 4 (Bernama) -- In the midst of his busy schedule governing the nation, the Prime Minister nevertheless found time today to bring cheer to children with impaired vision.

Twenty-six blind children listened with rapt attention as Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told them a story, which children for generations had always loved to hear, at the Malaysian Association for the Blind Complex in Brickfields here.

Even though the story titled "Why the Giraffe's Neck is Long" took only eight minutes, it would nevertheless be in the memory of the children for a long time as they had been told that the story teller was the Prime Minister himself.

Happiness shone from the faces of the children of the Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan (Impaired Vision), Jalan Batu, here. They sat cross-legged on a platform at the Dewan Serbaguna of the complex with looks of rapt attention as Dr Mahathir, sitting on a small chair, read out the story from a book with all the skills of a loving daddy.

The "Reading for the Blind Programme" is organised by Puteri Umno and the Umno Civil Action Bureau, both of which are headed by Azalina Othman Said.

After the Prime Minister had told his story, one of the children stepped forward and presented him with a small hamper.

Dr Mahathir was then taken on a tour of the complex by Azalina and Dr Ismail Mohd Salleh, Acting President of the Malaysian Association for the Blind.

A spokesman for the association said a recording of the story telling event had been made and would be kept at the association's library.

Azalina said that today was the Prime Minister's turn to tell stories under the programme in which 99 other Umno leaders were also involved.

Azalina said the reading programme for blind children was among the welfare events lined up by Puteri Umno which also focused on education, health and welfare services.

She said so far 30 Umno leaders had told stories to the blind children at Federal and state levels.

Among others registered in the story telling programme are Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz and Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamed.

-- BERNAMA

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